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CURRENT COMMENT.

WE have not yet read the great new symposium upon the civilization of the United States, but from all accounts we are inclined to approach it as an exercise in lugubriousness. Is it not possible to take too sombre a view of the ordeal of living in America? It has its disadvantages, no doubt, but after all, there is a deal of enjoyment in it. What other country, really, now, affords such unparalleled facilities for every man to become his own Rabelais? What country, that is, affords the opportunity for one to get such great store and abundance of generous, good-natured fun out of one's fellow-creatures? None that we know of. Perhaps the reason why America has never developed a great satirist is that everybody is doing it "on his own." The newspapers of the past week alone have been a bonanza for anyone who, like ourselves, prizes a good laugh above gold and precious stones. The Kentucky legislature takes a hard fall out of the doctrine of evolution; Mrs. Asquith lectures in New York; Mr. Will Hays proposes to found a chemically-pure moving-picture colony on Long Island; the Austrian, Jeritzka, will sing in a German opera, "Lohengrin," at the Metropolitan, for the benefit—think of it, ye gods!—for the benefit of the Navy Club; and a postal inspector rules Rabelais out of circulation as obscene. These are but a few items out of many, but can any other country match them?

THERE is some evidence that the Athenians, who were a pretty lucid lot, maintained an altar to the god of Laughter. This deity, we admit confidentially, has the first place in our own little private idolatries, and we find his worship extremely sanative and interesting. That is why we can never quite resolutely turn our back on the civilization of this country or become wholly impatient with it and wish it to be changed. For the sake of appearances we try to keep up to a due and decorous exasperation with the shortcomings of our fellow-citizens, but to save our lives, it can not last long—they are too funny. European civilization has many things to interest us, and we should like to see them all again, but it can not furnish those things that are the very salt and savour of our existence, and we would soon be coming home again in search of them. Where could we find another Mr. Lamont to talk about the religion of the Chinese, and newspapers to print what he says? Where could we find school-boards and women's clubs, or another Miss Janet Richards and a Girl's Protective League, to busy themselves with the

immoralities of dress and dance and the frowardness of the *Backfisch*? Where another Mr. Straton and Mr. Brady to discuss the morals of the theatre? Where another lot of high-pressure reformers comparable with our liberal brethren and their uplifting ilk? We could not for long get on without them. The dear, kindly, self-conscious, zealous, impenetrable stupidity—incessantly busy, incessantly meddling, naïvely certain that it and it alone, is right—one gets a little out of patience with it sometimes, perhaps, yet what amusement is comparable to the amusement that it furnishes so abundantly?

IT is impossible to believe that Senators Hitchcock and Johnson were born yesterday, so the gentle reader can take with considerable salt their protestations of "amazement" at learning that the four-power treaty was negotiated through private conversations of which no record was kept. A good generous shovelful of salt, we should say, would be about right, and we do not mean an ordinary shovel, either—we mean a steam-shovel. The Hitchcock resolution called for detailed information about the four-power treaty. Senators Lodge and Underwood had no objection to the resolution. In fact, they were rather in favour of it, intimating that since no data were available, it could do no harm and might as well be passed for general results. Whereupon Senators Hitchcock and Johnson said they were amazed. Why? What did they expect? How would the treaty have been negotiated if they, instead of Senators Lodge and Underwood, had been the negotiators? Would any more data upon the conversations have been available? Messrs. Hitchcock and Johnson must be extremely unimaginative men, not to be able to put themselves in the other fellow's place in a little matter of routine diplomacy like the negotiations over the four-power treaty.

By the wilful waste of a great deal of time, energy and public money, the Congress and the President contrive to keep the bonus-football in lively motion. The House will probably pass the bonus-bill, with a prudent eye to the elections this autumn, relying on its failure in the Senate, since the Senate is not greatly concerned with the elections. If the Senate should pass it, the President might save the day with a veto. The whole performance is as gross and vulgar a piece of vote-catching as was ever seen. The President hints strongly that action had better be deferred, but if the Congress insists, the best way to raise the money for the bonus is by a sales-tax. We, too, think that this is the best way. In the first place, the soldiers themselves, their families, friends and acquaintances will be paying most of the tax, inasmuch as a tax on sales is one which bears hardest on the poor—as might be inferred from the kind of advocacy it gets. When Mr. Harding and Mr. J. S. Bache and Mr. W. R. Hearst favour a fiscal measure, one does not have to wear one's brains threadbare to determine the direction of its incidence. Second, it is an easy tax to nullify through a boycott or buyer's strike, and perhaps by this time the consuming public has plucked up enough to organize something of the kind. So we are heartily for it.

SPEAKING of taxes, we are interested to notice the glib way that some of our contemporaries have with them when they refer to certain millions and hundreds of millions as "saved" by this or that measure. For example, Mr. Dawes's spectacular performances with the national budget will

enable members of the House to go before their constituents this autumn with a great record of economy, on paper. We earnestly advise those constituents to heckle their candidates a little, and see how much of that money is an actual saving, and how much will appear as a deficit next year. Again, we read that reduction of armament will save the Government \$200 million this year, and the scrapping of surplus war-material will save \$250 million more, and so on. All this is cheerful reading, but the most cheerful sight of all would be the reflection of some of these "savings" in the figures on our tax-bills; and this we shall not see. It is the first business of a Government to spend every cent that the tax-collector can raise; and it is the business of the collector to get "the maximum of feathers with the minimum of squawk." That is the plain fact that lies behind all these ornamental yarns about economy and saving; and if the unorganized taxpayers and rentpayers would once get it through their heads, there might be a chance of enforcing a few actual economies.

SOME one has admirably defined a conference as a meeting held preliminary to another conference. The conference, in other words, is a herring drawn across a trail. It is a device of politicians to fend off the exasperation of the public, and to convince their electorate that they are just about to begin to commence to get ready to do something miraculously momentous and stupendously significant. There was quite a little jag of unemployment last autumn, our readers will remember, and the prospects of the Republican party made it seem appropriate that Brother Hoover should hold a conference about it, which was accordingly done. This paper made a few remarks at the time, which some of our readers probably put down to inveterate cynicism, but which, nevertheless, we have been unable to regret. Brother Hoover's conference finally drew up a scheme for a comprehensive plan of public works, and for speeding up on them in hard times and slacking off in good times. This would be about as valuable a device for checking unemployment as a three-tined fork for checking the flow of the St. Lawrence; but it was something, and it was done. Well, last week a combination of Republican and Democratic Senators gathered around the pork-barrel and put a lasting quietus on the whole thing, just as anyone with a grain of sense might know they would. Such is the upshot of Brother Hoover's conference, peace to its ashes! We shall hereafter call attention to the upshot of other conferences, as time brings it forth; and meanwhile we hope our readers will excuse us if we appear to keep our enthusiasm for conferences under austere control.

WE are not much on Congressional investigations. The testimony is sometimes interesting, but the newspapers have a habit of reporting only so much of it as suits their taste. Again, the recent beatification of Mr. Newberry (Republican) by the Senate (Republican) does not lead us to expect much from the quizzing of a Cabinet-member (Republican) by a committee of the House (Republican). However, Mr. Liggett may know what he is about when he asks for an official inquisition upon the operations of Mr. Hoover and his friends. Certainly the accuser does well when he gets into print with charges that are several times as serious as any that Mr. Hoover has broached against the Committee for Famine Relief. It is a great thing to be able to read in the *New York Times* Mr. Liggett's agenda for the investigation: "... a probe into his [Mr. Hoover's] expenditure of \$55 million in Poland at a time when the Polish armies were invading Russia; the boast of his agent, Captain Gregory, that he brought about the overthrow of the Hungarian Government by maladministration of relief; all the facts pertaining to the purchase, transportation and distribution of relief by Mr. Hoover's agents; the source and authenticity of public statements issued by Mr. Hoover tending to discourage trade-relations with Russia; and finally any possible connexion which Mr. Hoover had or may have with certain foreign corporations which have or had extensive valuable

concessions in Russia." The list of items is a good one; if the inquiry is actually undertaken, some of these matters may prove as hard to whitewash as Tom Sawyer's back fence.

IN the course of their conversations on the subject of relief-work in Russia, Mr. Hoover and Mr. Liggett may perhaps keep the ball in the air until every one gets a good look at it. Mr. Hoover apparently thinks that his case against Mr. Liggett's American Committee for Russian Famine Relief will be won if he can only establish some sort of connexion between this committee and the Soviet Government, by way of the Russian Red Cross. We are not disposed to debate the reality of this connexion. For purposes of argument, we will gladly assume that the relationship is as close as that which unites the American Relief Administration and the Government at Washington; and having made this assumption, we should like to ask which organization is the more likely to play politics in Russia, the one that is on friendly terms with the Government of that country, or the one that takes orders from a foreign and hostile Government which still gives aid and comfort to the Bakhmetievs, the Lvovs, the Avksentiev, the Miliukovs, and all the other counter-revolutionaries who have been cast upon these shores?

PRESIDENT HARDING, says a recent Washington dispatch, has "let it become known" that the United States Government sees no prospect of the resumption of official relations with the Mexican Government, because the Mexican Government refuses to grant the guarantees upon which this Government "rigidly insists" as a condition precedent to recognition of the Obregon regime. That is to say, Mr. Harding's Administration has thus far been unable to secure from the Mexican Government concessions satisfactory to American investors in Mexico. Meanwhile there are rumours of uneasiness along the border, rumours of an imminent anti-Obregon rebellion which, according to Mr. Noel D. Clark of Mexico City, Vice-President of the International Commercial Exposition, is being financed by oil-interests. "As long as oil-men can keep Mexico in a state of chaos," said Mr. Clark, "they will not have to pay production-taxes which amount to seventy-five centavos a barrel."

It seems to us that there may be a good deal more behind this brewing rebellion than the wish to escape production-taxes. May not the oil-interests be manoeuvring for a situation which would bring about an American occupation of Mexico? These rumours of revolution come from the border, be it noted; and on the border are several thousand American troops, ready to march on Mexico City at the drop of the hat. Indeed, Fort Bliss is reported to be already mobilized, and prepared to "protect American lives and property"; and from Washington comes the reassuring report that "War Department officials feel that they are competent to cope with any situation which may arise, even if it should assume such proportions as to warrant an expedition across the border." Now what, we ask, with American diplomacy backing American concessionaires against the Mexican Government, and the United States army being held ready for action on the Mexican border; what, under such circumstances, could be more natural than for those concessionaires to stir up some trouble in Mexico which might serve this Government as a pretext for wringing from the Mexican Government by violence the "guarantees" it has failed to get by negotiation?

NEW YORK is a long way from Dublin and Belfast, and we can not be quite sure that we have the true inwardness of the disturbances that are going on in Ireland. It is possible and we think, extremely likely, that they represent an effort to let Sir James Craig out with a whole skin. We think this because, beyond doubt, Ulstermen of sense and understanding have come to see that consolidation with the South is their only chance of self-preservation. Mr. Lloyd George denies that he has any private under-

standing with Sir James Craig or that he has made any representations to him about the attitudes of the British Government, different from those that he has made to Michael Collins. Collins says that everything looks bright, that "the British Government is delivering the goods," and that the evacuation of British troops from Ireland is now proceeding. As far as we can see, the stage is appropriately set for Sir James Craig to rise up before his bitter-enders and say, "Well, there it is, you see!—we can expect nothing from the British Government, so what can we do but put our pride in our pocket and join in with the South?"

WE do not say that this will be the way of it, but only that it may be. The dyed-in-the-wool North of Ireland Protestant is a terrible fellow, to be sure, and all his traditions are for dying with his boots on. But it is one thing to die under the walls of Troy, as the shipwrecked Æneas remarked, and quite another to die an inglorious and unsoldierly death from natural causes. We would not be surprised if Sir James Craig found that the traditional spirit of Ulster had been pretty well honeycombed by the economic weapon employed against it by Sinn Fein. The boycott has been so thoroughly organized and so relentlessly carried out that no goods have been allowed to pass out of Ulster except such as Sinn Fein could be sure would never be paid for. Sinn Fein has given every facility for the withdrawal of monies from the Ulster Bank, which has branches all over Ireland, but has effectively withstood a single copper of deposits going into its coffers. The exports of the Ulster linen industry have dropped from £23 million to £4½ million, and the home trade is utterly ruined. The cumulative effect of a few little matters like these is strongly towards a new and conciliatory estimate of ancient grudges. One need not take a wholly cynical view of patriotism to admit that it is a deal easier to be a real high-pressure hundred-per-cen-ter if there is a little money in it than if it costs something. Even our dollar-a-year men found that out, and so, probably, have the Ulsterites.

THE Ulsterman, moreover, has to contemplate the possibility of millions of exiled Irishmen, with others, sharing in a great co-operative scheme for financing and opening out into commercial enterprises, the neglected coal, iron, copper, silver, sulphur, limestone, and other mineral resources of Ireland, which under the repressions of the Act of Union could not be exploited. Ireland has waterfalls enough to give her all the motive power that her industries can use. Her agriculture is now so prosperous, and she is in such a good way for fat cattle, that a co-operative packing concern started at Wexford in 1918 with a paid-up capital of £1500, transacted £250,000 worth of business in six months. Ireland, as this paper has heretofore pointed out, could become relatively the most prosperous country in the world. We do not think she will be, for reasons that we have already stated; but she could be: and it is the Ulsterman's contemplation of this possibility, with himself on the outside looking in, that makes him a prey to peculiarly bitter reflections. "What's the world to a man when his wife's a widdy?"—so runs a wise and profound Irish proverb. What, indeed, is patriotism to a man when the other chap walks off with all the profits?

THE British Prime Minister has lately enlightened the House of Commons concerning the causes of unrest in India. As Mr. Lloyd George puts it, with all the picturesque rhetoric of the stump-orator, "Here you have a population with Eastern ideas and Eastern experience. Modern ideas and Western ideas of liberty and self-government were unknown. . . . We have had a considerable number of rich Indians sending their children to be educated in English universities. They were saturated with Western ideas and went back full of them. The great Western ideas of liberty became their ideals. It was bound to create unrest. It was putting new wine into old bottles—the fierce and often coarser wines of the West into

the older bottles of the East, accustomed to mild vintages. They burst. There was leakage. The wine spread and intoxication spread over the East."

Now it seems to us that it was most unwise of the British Government to allow these Easterners to become thus imbued with "the great Western idea of liberty," since it is costing the British Government no end of trouble and expense to repress that idea among its Indian subjects. To continue Mr. Lloyd George's eloquent figure of speech, it seems that His Majesty's Government has its hands pretty full these days mending up the old Eastern bottles and wiping up the new Western wine with which they are bursting. Indeed, there is something ironical in the fact that the "intoxication" which this new wine of Western ideals is causing in the East seems pretty consistently to display itself in those sections where the great Western Governments are engaged in doing Eastern peoples for their own good. It is most unfortunate that those Governments which profess to be the exponents of this great Western ideal are forced to undertake the painful duty of stamping it out, for the good of the people it has infected.

IN India the stamping-out process is not proceeding as well as the British Government might desire. Mr. Gandhi and his followers are making no end of trouble for the British *raj*, so much so that the Indian Government has been forced to threaten stern measures against the participants in the proposed "civil disobedience" campaign of the Non-Coöperation movement. In this connexion, it is interesting to note how closely this Indian revolutionist movement is following the tactics used in Ireland by Sinn Fein, the method of making a Government ineffective by quietly ignoring its existence. The British Government seems determined to combat these tactics with the same methods of wholesale imprisonment, arson and murder which it used in Ireland, and we see no reason to suppose that in the end it will not be obliged to come to terms with the Indian revolutionists, just as it was forced at last to "shake hands with murder" in Ireland. By way of commentary, one is naturally led to remark how poverty-stricken Governments are in the matter of resources. Take away imprisonment, arson and murder, and really there is nothing left. When, therefore, a Government approaches a situation in which imprisonment, arson and murder are ineffectual, it is the most grotesquely helpless thing, probably, on the face of the earth.

THE Inter-Allied High Commission of the Rhineland has decided that public lectures on the question of responsibility for the war are likely to give rise to some disturbance, and accordingly such lectures have been prohibited. Somehow it seems to us that the Commission is about four years late. Even before the war was over, the Germans had learned something, and had undertaken a partial house-cleaning. In Russia, the people learned more, and did more. In France, England and the United States, however, there is still a chance that the people will never learn anything, or do anything. Hence it seems too bad that the commission should dissipate its energies in the valley of the Rhine, when there is so much important work to be done elsewhere. Why should the members of the Commission not come home to their respective countries, and proceed to brighten the corner where they are?

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TOPICS OF THE DAY.

GENOA OR PHILIPPI?

THE name of Genoa is, in a political sense, symbolic. It used to be said that Boston is not a place, but a state of mind. Somewhat similarly, the Genoa conference, we think, may not be a formal conference, and may not be held at Genoa, but is a mere symbol of the inevitable reckoning, the inevitable facing of facts. At present, it seems highly improbable that any conference will be held at Genoa in the month of March. The French Government has moved for a postponement, nominally to make sure that nothing will be discussed except those matters that it is willing to discuss, but really in order to put off the evil day as far as possible. The British Government is eagerly opposed to postponement; the United States Government has committed itself, apparently, to a policy of silence and watchful waiting. The German and Russian Governments, quite well aware that they are in the key-position, are doing nothing in particular beyond displaying a general courteous agreeableness towards anything and everything that may be proposed. They are somewhat like the criminal who remarked, on his way to execution, that he saw no need of being in a hurry since nothing could be done until he got there.

The situation is extremely delicate and difficult, and it is correspondingly interesting. The failure of the politicians has been for a long time manifest to nearly everybody, even themselves, but they became so thoroughly involved in their own lies and catchwords that they were unable to do anything but go on in them. Now they are at close quarters with a situation in which their claptrap is of no avail. There is a saying that it is of no use to preach Christianity to empty stomachs. Similarly as long as there was a margin of economic safety in which to operate, the politician's stock phrases about making the world safe for democracy, making Germany pay, hanging the Kaiser, the triumph of right and justice, and so on, had considerable force. That margin has now shrunk to the breadth of a geometrical line; and stock phrases, claptrap and buncombe have consequently lost their carrying power. How completely they have lost it, is seen in the case of the French Government. M. Poincaré has done his best to galvanize them into effectiveness, but to no purpose. As narrowly nationalist and militarist as our own Mr. Roosevelt, thoroughly reactionary in every instinct and tendency, he has made every effort to keep the spirit of his countrymen up to the mark—and he is losing ground every day. Squeezing an indemnity out of Germany and resisting bolshevism to the bitter end—all this has its fascinations, no doubt, for a country that is well enough off to afford indulgence in such pursuits, but it is becoming increasingly clear to the French people that what they really want is business. They want to get trade going; and they are beginning to perceive that as long as they occupy themselves with the forms of entertainment so assiduously recommended to them by M. Poincaré, trade will not go. The other nations of Europe are in the same case, Great Britain especially so. The British have always looked upon the little eccentricities of their politicians with lenient good humour, and when times are even moderately fair they are willing to do anything in reason to support their extravagances; but they are intolerably hard up just now, and simply can not afford to listen any longer to the old line of claptrap. Buncombe, as a substitute for business, does well

enough for a certain length of time, but not permanently.

Thus the politician is at the end of his string. If, for instance, he proposes to consider the economic condition of Europe, and calls a conference for that purpose, whether at Genoa or elsewhere, whether next month or three months later, he is at once confronted by the horrid poser of what to do about Germany and Russia. Germany, no doubt, is deceitful and desperately wicked, Russia will not pay her bills and will be an *enfant terrible* of shocking bad manners in the decorum of old-line international diplomacy; yet there the wretched creatures stand, importunately demanding attention—whistling cheerfully, with their hands in their pockets, and knocking their heels together on the door-step, well aware that they must have attention and that they are going to get it. There can be no settlement in Europe without taking them into full account. If they are not taken into account, they will drop into one another's arms, with consequences which we have already outlined in this paper. But from the politician's point of view, the very mischief of it is that if they are taken into account, positively nothing can be done but to put them in one another's arms—and then the same calamitous consequences will follow.

This is merely a specimen of the kind of thing that an economic conference must thrash over. Is it any wonder that there is a marked reluctance towards the Genoa meeting? Such a conference would have purely the nature of obsequies; it would be the mere setting up of one cold *hic jacet* after another over vast bodies of dead and buried buncombe, to be followed by a grand banquet upon funeral baked meats whereof the bill of fare should offer nothing but crow—a repulsive prospect. Is it surprising that there is no great alacrity about accepting the invitation to Genoa?

We think it possible that Mr. Lloyd George's insistence on the conference may be in the nature of what the card-players call rapping for a show-down. Aware that all hands are at the end of their tether, it may be that he wishes to bring all hands together around the table for a grand general acknowledgment that they are at the end of their tether, and start out afresh upon the basis of this one common, unanimous understanding. It seems to us that this might be a clever thing to do, and Mr. George is extremely clever. At all events, when the conference assembles for its opening session, and the doors are locked, shades drawn, key-holes stuffed and sentries posted, we can imagine Mr. Lloyd George rising in his place and saying, "Gentlemen, here we are. As the poet says, We're here because we're here because we're here because we're here. That is to say, there is no other place for us to be, and unless we watch our ways carefully, we shall not be long even here. Common peril is pregnant with common understanding, and we are in grave peril, so let us be frank with ourselves and with one another in facing our situation. America, you won't get paid; you can put your certificates of indebtedness in the stove. France, you will not get your indemnity—it isn't to be had. Nor can you stand out against the reinstatement of Russia and Germany in the world of economic affairs, because if you do, it will bust you. As for ourselves, we recognize that our share of the inter-Allied obligations is worthless, and that our imperial system is going to pot. There, gentlemen, are the facts. We all held out against them as long as we could, we did our best to lie them out of the way, but they would not go. Now let us acknowledge them, let us begin on the basis of a clear common understanding that, as our American cousins say, we are up against it; and then,

with all the guff and humbug and buncombe out of the way, let us ask ourselves what is to be done next."

Something like this may now be in Mr. George's mind, for something like this must ultimately take place. If he should succeed in getting the conference assembled and should address it in this vein, he would furnish his hearers their full money's worth of entertainment. We doubt, however, that the conference will assemble or that the European politicians will find grace to acknowledge the pickle they are in until too late—as we think it is even now quite too late—for them to get out of it.

BUILDING ON SAND.

THE epidemic of State legislation against labour-disputes seems to be making headway. There are at present two separate bills before the New York State Legislature, either of which is supposed to provide adequate guarantees against future labour-troubles. The first of these was drafted by the New York Board of Trade and Transportation, and provides that labour-disputes in industries vital to the public welfare—i. e., mining, transportation, and the production and distribution of food, clothing, and other essential articles—shall be settled by an industrial relations term of the Supreme Court. The decisions of the Court are to be binding, and it may issue permanent injunctions against strikes and lockouts. The second bill is the work of the New York Chamber of Commerce. It provides that labour-disputes shall be referred to the State Industrial Commission, which shall exercise strict supervision over all labour-organizations. Labour-unions are to be required to file monthly statements with the Commission and to throw open all their accounts and records for audit by the State. Strikes are declared unlawful in any case where the Board shall not have delivered its decision in the dispute, unless it shall have allowed six months to elapse without making any decision. It appears that the decisions of the Board are to have the effect of recommendations, and that it is not to exercise any authority over employers.

As one might infer from their origin, both of these bills represent a frank attempt to write into law the employers' opinion of labour-disputes. Organized labour has had no hand in their drafting; nor, in either of them, is there evident any sincere attempt to treat labour-disputes either with justice or with the appearance of justice. Their only object seems to be to relieve the employer from the inconvenience and loss due to strikes. An indication of the one-sided way in which such legislation would operate may be found in Mr. George Soule's criticism of the bill drafted by the Board of Trade and Transportation:

If the first court decides that wages are too low, employers can refuse to increase them and labour then has the privilege of taking the case to another court where the question might take years to decide. If the court, on the other hand, decided that wages were too high, the employers would be privileged to cut their pay roll immediately and labour would be enjoined from using its only effective weapon—the strike.

However, as Mr. Soule wisely remarked, there is little to be gained by specific criticism of such legislation, since it is based upon the principle of compulsory arbitration, and compulsory arbitration has already failed conspicuously in Kansas and in Australia. It is impossible to coerce people into accepting settlements which they feel to be unjust; therefore there is no more reason to expect industrial peace from the exercise of the State's authority on behalf of the employer than there would be if it were exercised on behalf of the employee. Indeed, as we have often had occasion to remark, we do not believe that any kind of State

regulation is likely to prove effective in dealing with industrial disputes; and here we find ourselves in disagreement, not only with the New York Board of Trade and Transportation, but also with the spokesmen of organized labour, like Mr. Soule who advocates the creation of a National Labour Commission patterned after the Federal Trade Commission.

We have two good reasons for this scepticism. The first arises from our profound distrust of political government. When one realizes that political government exists primarily to facilitate the economic exploitation of one class in society by another; and when one remembers that labour is of the exploited class; then it is difficult to believe that any agency of political government may be depended upon to secure economic justice for the worker. It is doubly difficult to believe in such means when one considers that up to the present time no Federal Commission has accomplished anything calculated to abolish even one small evil in our economic system. The second reason why we can not get up much excitement over the idea of establishing a permanent labour-commission is that the demand for such a body seems to be based upon a misapprehension of the nature of economic justice. Apparently the people who advocate such a commission—even the spokesmen of labour—expect it to be concerned with collecting facts which may serve as a basis for settling questions involving wages, hours, and working-conditions; in other words, it is expected to concern itself with the labourer, not as a human being, but as an industrial machine.

Now, this is a most unpromising attempt to attain economic justice; for economic justice lies, not in the arbitrary fixing of wages and working-conditions, and a "fair" return on capital, but in free access to natural opportunities for both the capitalist and the labourer. What the advocates of governmental regulation in labour-disputes fail to realize is that there are three factors in production, i. e., capital, labour and *land*, and that while land is tied up by monopolists, under the protection of political government, capital and labour can have access to the land only on the terms of the monopolist. It would seem to us, then, that the first thing to do is to get rid of the monopolist; but he is in no danger of being ousted from his sinecure as long as employers busy themselves with anti-strike legislation and the whole energy of organized labour is absorbed in such relatively superficial considerations as shorter hours, higher wages, and improved working-conditions.

THE REIGN OF MISRULE.

THE winter's crime-wave having rolled in, as predicted, the police-departments and the courts are apparently on the point of foundering with all hands on board. The other day one of our judges came up for air, and incidentally he managed to make it known that the death-penalty was the proper punishment for robbery in the first degree. When one considers the situation with which the judge is called upon to deal, one can not fail to see great possibilities in his suggestion. If, in the presence of unemployment and destitution, the threat of death is the appropriate means for checking crimes against property in this country, how would the judge go about dealing with cannibalism in the famine-area of Russia? Would he break the criminals on the wheel, and boil them afterwards in oil; or would he perhaps consider it worth while to feed the people, and thus to give them a choice between human flesh and other more conventional articles of diet?

Unemployment is not, of course, the sole cause of crime, although the Parole Board of New York State implies that these matters may be in some way connected, when it holds in prison a number of men who are eligible for parole, but for whom no jobs can be found. Another cause of crime, which could hardly be removed by the imposition of the death-penalty for robbery, is the lawlessness of the legislatures and the courts in the enactment and enforcement of pestilent statutes, and the sheer criminality of the police in their dealings with friendless men. It is notorious that most of the laws framed by our politicians are not enforceable and are not intended to be enforced. It is notorious also that rich offenders against the criminal code regularly wriggle out of the judicial maze unpunished. Likewise it is true that the common criminal sometimes escapes by the same path, because of the sheer laxness and inefficiency of a system that sometimes metes out punishments of inhuman severity, and sometimes none at all.

If the reign of misrule in codes and courts encourages a general disrespect for law, and a disposition to take chances, the merciless beatings which the police deal out to friendless suspects give a positive stimulus to the use of violence. When Luther Boddy was first taken into custody in New York City, the one thing he was sure of was that he would be flogged within an inch of his life, as soon as he reached the police-station. He testifies that he had previously been arrested about a dozen times, and that in each instance he had been so badly beaten that he was obliged to spend a week in bed or in the hospital. There was no justice in this, and he knew it; when he shot the two officers who arrested him, he was returning evil for evil, as the police themselves had taught him to do. He was outside the law, but we have no doubt whatever that the police had been there with him more than once. We are willing to believe almost anything that sounds half-way reasonable; but as long as thousands of men want work and can not find it; as long as politicians play fast and loose with legislation, and judges gamble with the principles of justice; as long as the police administer brutal punishment before the trial; we shall find it hard to swallow the notion that the extension of capital punishment will help very much to clear this country of crime.

THIS THEOCRACY OF OURS.

PERHAPS nothing is more embarrassing to a modest American travelling in foreign parts than the curiosity he encounters regarding American Puritanism. This bright zeal of ours to do good, this keen relish for improving ourselves and our neighbours—especially our neighbours—our breathless plunge into prohibition, our severe notions about bathing-dresses, the deep vein of Sunday-school refinement which we constantly exhibit to an astonished and demoralized world, all this is very hard to explain to benighted foreigners who live in a climate as negligent, as relaxing, as Europe's.

Of course, Europe, too, makes little dabs at Puritanism. Schnitzler's "Reigen" is almost, but not quite, forbidden in Vienna; it is almost, but not quite, penalized in Berlin; and in England every now and again Mrs. Grundy, like Mrs. Gargery, breaks loose and goes on the rampage. But these manifestations, obviously, have an apologetic air; they falter and disappear. Even the modern "stunt" press of Europe spares the Continent those "crusades" with which we are so familiar in these United States.

The tendency abroad is to assume, quite brashly, that this Puritanism of ours is merely our latest fad, that to-morrow, perhaps, we shall be off on another tack. It is true, of course, that we Americans, like the Athenians of old, are ever seeking some new thing; it is true that we take more pleasure, seemingly, in change as change than the average European does, but our novelties and our changes must run in the groove of the national character; they must be, on the whole, congenial to our plutocratic theocracy.

Especially to the theocracy. As things are now, the ambition of the United States is to become a comfortable Nonconformist paradise. All that mortal men and women can do to achieve and perpetuate a rigorous social morality, in a community of substantial creature comforts, we intend to do. Nowhere in the world has the Protestant clergyman such influence upon legislation as in this Republic of ours. Whenever one encounters social legislation of a novel or inconvenient sort, the rule is, not in the French phrase "*cherchez la femme*," but more colloquially, "find the Doc," meaning the estimable leader of a flock, which is, presumably, responsible for all that is done by its shepherd.

And so it was in the beginning. Even in the "Mayflower." There were thirty-five Puritans on board the "Mayflower" and sixty-seven plain, everyday men and women, not Puritans. But it was the thirty-five who ran the ship; and it was the thirty-five who drew up on shipboard the Constitution for the new colony which every blessed soul on board that ship signed in the cabin, as we know, on a table at the head of which sat a God-fearing man with an undershot jaw.

That's the way we began, and the Massachusetts colony carried on zealously the precedent established so successfully on the "Mayflower." They proselyted; they compelled; they annexed. They disliked the Quakers, not only because they were different but because they were tolerant. Hence they persecuted the Quakers insantly; they drove them from the colony, and when they returned, they flogged them and threw them into jail and even put them to death. The scandal of it reached England and drew from Sir Richard Saltonstall, himself a devout Puritan, a horrified protest addressed to Cotton Mather:

It doth not a little grieve my spirit what sad things are reported dayly of your tyranny and persecution in New England. . . . These rigid wayse have layd you very lowe in the hearts of the saynts. I doe assure you I have heard them pray in the publike assemblies that the Lord would give you meeke and humble spirits, not to stryve so much for uniformity as to keepe the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Sir Richard went on to warn them "not to practise in a wilderness those very courses which you went so farre to escape." To this Cotton Mather replied that they coerced no one; they merely insisted on obedience to God!

True; religious toleration of a sort did finally emerge and even a certain amount of heterodoxy. By the time of the Revolutionary War some of the French heresies had become popular, but in the main, the population rolling westward across the continent has always struggled to carry aloft the spirit of the Massachusetts colony: they have struggled to be good themselves and, in any event and at all costs, to keep others from being bad. When the English historian, Lord Acton, visited this country in 1853, just after the State of Maine had adopted prohibition, he wrote in his diary:

It appears that the temperance-societies do great harm in America. They have met with enthusiastic support. In Maine, the legislature has passed a law forbidding liquor to be sold, so that the most vexatious proceedings must be carried on to

prevent it. The people of Maine have earned the name of maniacs in consequence. This specimen of bureaucratic interference appears strange in such a free country.

As for the "bad men" of the pioneering days in the West surely there was nothing of the Puritan about them. On the contrary, beneath the blue flannel shirts in Roaring Camp beat hearts warm with all the orthodox conventions—except one or two. Did not Mr. Roosevelt, Puritan of the Puritans, find the West as innocuous as the East and a trifle more conventional into the bargain?

In short, the United States started as a theocracy, and thus far has never strayed far from type. It is unthinkable that a Disraeli, for example, could ever be president. We may not be averse to a little fizz and sparkle for ourselves, but we demand a rigid conformity in our political leaders. We started, then, as a theocracy, and now we have become a plutocratic theocracy. There are signs, here and there, say the discerning, that here is another *entente* that is going to smash. It seems that our plutocracy is becoming a little bit weary of our Puritanism. The nearer New York approaches Topeka, Kansas, in all that makes life worth living, the more outspoken becomes the discontent in certain influential quarters. It seems to us quite likely that the next decade or two may see some revolt of the sheep against the shepherds.

LADIES OF THE HIGH SEAS.

It is somewhat strange in these days of publicity for all forms of feminine achievement, that the lives of the female pirates of the early seventeenth century should be so completely forgotten. The careers of these once famous ladies indicate an energy and a force of personality, which, focused and controlled in an age appreciative of such qualities in the sex, might have led them far in the modern world of political endeavour, or of civic reform and welfare-work. Though no aptitude for home-making is to be discovered in the story of their strenuous lives, yet they did not live without sentiment, and one is as much moved by their romances as by the more circumspect love affairs of our social workers.

The analogy is not perhaps entirely appropriate, but it must be remembered that in the early seventeenth century, when these women lived—the lives of two particularly have come down to us in the volumes of the old Dutchman, Esquemeling—piracy offered the young miss who was dissatisfied with the narrow scope of the home, a more colourful, if a more hazardous experience, than does the modern field of politics and applied sociology. It was a period of extremes. If one were not content to stay at home and await the desirable *parti*, one might as well, from a social point of view, become an out-and-out pirate.

The Spanish Main was then the scene of a drama which was to provide story-book material for at least the next three centuries. The great Drake had sufficiently subdued the Spanish domination of the West Indies, to put English piracy, so to speak, on its feet, incidentally reaping for himself an enormous fortune. The island of Tortuga de Mar with its strategic harbour and secretive woodland provided a convenient foothold for the professional buccaneer. A tempting life they found here, with a tang of that fine adventure that ever holds threats of a slashed throat, a promise of sterling booty, and rich leisure, wherein one warms the belly with sack, and stuffs it well with juicy meat, "red as a rose." And talk—think of the talk! No acrid grumblings at the price of things, except perhaps jocosely on the cost of Indian wives—though there were always some rare bargains to be had in that line. Rather, it was a perpetual gossip of filching and fighting, of the uncut emeralds on the last galleass from Brazil, of the great Blackbeard with his gunpowder-blackened face. Yet, after all, taken at its best, with all consideration of its manifold advantages, it was hardly the ideal society for a lady.

Not, indeed, that ladies were regarded as essential to the scene. It was in the guise of men that our heroines obtained their entrée. In the old woodland where they stand side by side, their sex to be sure is obvious enough; and, though all the rest of their costume is strictly masculine, on their heads appears what might be dubbed a bonnet, some bizarre fichu, some alien cambric, a pathetic symbol of their abandoned status. But there is no pathos in their general demeanour.

Bare feet planted firmly, wide apart, in loose linen breeches, stained doubtless a dirty crimson with the blood of the enemy, in each sash a brace of pistols and in one hand a nasty-looking ax and in the other a substantial sword, these ladies, Mary Read and Anne Bonny by name, stand ready for all ventures.

First, to contemplate the career of Anne. Born in Cork, Anne was taken by her parents to Carolina early in her youth. She proved a restless daughter. It is rumoured that she once killed an English serving maid with a case-knife, and it is certain that on one occasion at least she beat up a young man who no doubt ventured to be what Anne herself in this day and generation would call "fresh." Finally she capped her escapades by marrying a seafaring man, "not worth a groat." This being too much for her father, he turned the couple out, but Anne later indicated her approval of the parental judgment by leaving her husband in favour of the pirate-commander of the ship where fate had decided that she was later to meet the redoubtable Mary Read.

The presence of two women on board one ship must not give the impression that the Spanish Main at this time was overcrowded with vagrant femininity; it is but another instance of the truth of the saying that it never rains but it pours. The appearance of these ladies certainly came as a surprise to the worthy pirate-captain who is said to have expressed himself in the vivacious vernacular of the sea on finding his position considerably complicated by the finishing-school atmosphere which seemed to pervade his craft. The gifted Anne, however, displaying a certain womanly tact at this crisis, the excellent man soon came to perceive the advantages of a woman's refining presence on board a ship, and he even accepted Mary, who, on her part, had already taken a fancy to a personable youngster aboard, who had formerly rather bored the rest of the crew by his inability to shake off a brooding home-sickness.

Let it not be imagined, however, that life was made any easier for the ladies, or that they showed any signs of expecting it to be made easy for them. For them the same rewards and penalties as for the men, the same division of the spoils, the same recompense in case of loss of limb. Like the men their compensation for the loss of both legs was 1500 pieces-of-eight or fifteen slaves, for the loss of both hands 1800 pieces-of-eight or eighteen slaves, and so on. To them was allotted the same salt pork, and the same quarter can of beer with a "bisket" of bread, and now and then a "sucket" as a special delicacy. They worked too, scrubbing down the deck with a mixture of vinegar and sand, and ran their risks of an occasional keel-hauling or a flogging with a "cherrilicum," though they seem never to have had their tongues scrubbed with sand and canvas, as was the reward of the profane. When it came to a fight, these heroic women held their own with the best. In one episode, the memory of which must have been very galling to the pirates in later years, the two girls alone held the deck and saved the ship from capture, after Mary had shouted to the rest of the crew to come up and fight like men, and had even fired her gun into the hold, "killing one and wounding others." With stuff of such grit aboard who can wonder that it was a successful cruise, and that a great number of ships belonging to Jamaica and the West Indies were taken.

But all good things come to an end and presently we learn that the Captain failed to retain Anne's respect as she became better acquainted with him. As ill luck would have it they were both captured, and though Anne did not hesitate to appeal to her sex as a protection, thus securing a reprieve of sentence, she had nothing kinder to say to the captain at their last meeting than that "if he had fought like a man, he need not have been hanged like a dog."

Mary Read was of different calibre. She had in her the making of a tender heroine. Her mother we are told had found it desirable for certain family reasons to bring up her daughter as a boy, a rôle to which Mary took so agreeably that in her early teens, "growing bold and strong, and having also a roving mind," she ran away from her home in London and "entered herself" as a ship's boy on board a man-of-war. Growing doubtful, however, of the advantages of a life on the sea, she deserted, and we next hear of her turning up in Flanders as a private in a "Regiment of Foot." Here she seems to have "behaved herself with a great deal of bravery upon all actions," but, as she could not afford to buy a commission, she quitted this branch of service and "took on in a Regiment of Horse."

In this Regiment of Horse, at it happened, was a handsome young Fleming who appeared to our Mary as being totally unlike anyone she had ever met in her life before. In his presence all her light-hearted adaptability faded away. In

her unreasonable concern for his precious safety she did not hesitate to place her own life in jeopardy in several engagements with the enemy. In his absence she fretted and moped and even began to neglect the proper care of her weapons and accoutrements. And now her conscience began to trouble her as to the morality of her disguise. At last she could endure it no longer, and she told the young Fleming all. A few days later the officers of the regiment were amazed to hear that two of their troopers had married. Apparently the situation appealed to the general sentiment, for such generous gifts were heaped upon the happy couple that they were able to leave the army, and set up as host and hostess of an inn.

But it was not to be Mary's happy lot to spend her days as wife and hostess. From some unrecorded ailment of peace her husband died. Their money was gone, and Mary lost interest in the inn and once more joined a Regiment of Foot, this time in Holland, until a temporary peace put an end to her enlistment, whereupon she shipped on board a Dutch vessel sailing for the West Indies.

It was the fortune of this boat to be captured by English pirates, to whose patriotism, Mary, as the only English person aboard, at once appealed. The pirates did not take long to decide that she was too young a widow to walk the plank. Without more ado they accepted her as one of themselves. It was Mary's first step into outlawry, but the circumstances were compelling, and after all it was good to be with Englishmen again. Sad as it is to see a widow turn to piracy on the high seas, we must be merciful and consider the hardships of her life. The ethical conceptions of the day were ambiguous enough—was not Drake accepted as a great hero and patriot? Perhaps Mary too dreamed of being admiral some day.

From this point in the career of our heroine there followed a period of vicissitudes which included an interlude of leisure on Tortuga de Mar, where her days were spent unresistingly according to the manners of the place, conformist if not cloistral. But presently she put to sea again, this time on the same ship with Anne Bonny; and there now came the second great romantic adventure of her life, for among the crew was "a young fellow of most engaging behaviour," and the susceptible Mary was "smitten with his person and address."

What sort of man was this happy pirate? Something of his character may be gathered from one of the most telling episodes of Mary's episodic life. From this story it is clear enough that he was something of a dreamer, an idealist, with a vision of some unknown good woman for ever in his heart, sighing over his share of the spoils as he thought of the ivy-clad cottage it would buy, if he were home in England. Though as a pirate he was not lacking in courage, he was evidently not conspicuous among his fellows for strength or skill. It is recorded of him that having quarrelled with a shipmate, he arranged, as was the custom, to go ashore and fight it out; but Mary was at once terror-stricken for the safety of her lover. She knew that no persuasion could hold him back. Indeed she would not wish for that. Ingeniously she took the matter in her own hands. She also picked a quarrel with her lover's enemy, challenged him to meet her ashore just two hours before his other appointment, and, fighting him with sword and pistol, killed him on the spot.

Before this deed of prowess, whatever other ideal he might have had for the partner of his little ivy-clad cottage vanished from the boy's fancy. We are given to understand that, according to the terse, informal ceremony in vogue among the buccaneers, they were married. But alas! for Mary it was again to be only a brief wedlock. Both she and her young husband were captured soon after by the authorities and imprisoned in Jamaica. Whether popular sympathy, which was strongly with them, secured the boy's reprieve is not known, but Mary was released though it brought her little joy, for very shortly after she died of a prison-fever.

More than any other pirate in history, Mary Read studied and synthesized the relations of the pirate to established society. A pirate-captain once asked her what pleasure she could find in such a life, with its ever present danger of capture and death. Her ready answer shows that she had made up her mind on the subject. "Hanging," she said, "was no great hardship, for were it not for that, every cowardly fellow would turn pirate, and so infest the seas that men of courage must starve. If it were left to the choice of the pirates, they would not have the punishment less than death, the fear of which kept some dastardly rogues honest; and many of those who are now cheating widows and orphans and oppressing their poor neighbours (who have no money to obtain justice) would then rob at sea, and the ocean would be crowded with rogues, like the land, and no merchant would venture out; so that the trade in a little time would not be worth following."

JOHN MOSHER.

COLLEGE EDUCATION: AN INQUEST.

II

THERE is an opinion abroad, especially in radical circles, to the effect that the university president is an autocrat, a dollar-marked capitalist, a great mogul, a grand *seigneur*, a mikado, and a hetman all combined in one. He is viewed as an austere figure sitting on a throne behind closed doors and summoning now and then the trembling vassals of his realm. With utter sang-froid, he cuts off the academic head of this instructor or that professor and promotes to high position in his government this pliant janitor or that obsequious cup-bearer. He watches for heresies with the sleepless zeal of the Holy Inquisition, and without mercy brings vengeance on the head of the unfaithful.

Nothing could be further from the truth. There have been few such despots in the history of the world. The Grand Turk, we are told, must truck and huckster. The Tsar of all the Russias was tied fast in a mesh of clerical and ducal intrigues. He could, like Heine on his death-bed, wink an eye or whistle softly; but as for masterful tyranny, precious little of it could the Tsar exercise. Academic society, like all other organisms, is complex, containing much that is immovable in the midst of change. The university president is therefore subject to entangling alliances and ancient heritages, like any other person who succeeds to power.

Continuing in the realm of figurative speech, it would be better, and nearer the truth, to say that instead of being a despot, the university president presides over a tropical jungle. His institution is a historic growth. For a thousand years giant trees have flourished in it and fallen to earth in hopeless ruin and decay. Weeds, vines, reeds, underbrush, coarse grass grow high, thick and rank. The wild flowers with their gorgeous colours and exotic perfumes are there. The jungle is full of queer animals, old, young, and middle-aged. Some run about, seeking whom they may devour. Others sit quietly in corners, shrinking from observation, searching curiously for unknown things. There are all kinds of customs, laws, compacts, understandings, agreements, promises, and obligations, created by years of conscious, unconscious, and subconscious operations. It is a vast, magnificent, and historic tangle. About all that the mighty gentleman who presides over it can do, is to stand on a height above it and squirt perfume on the ensemble.

To descend to earth, let us see what it is that a college president acquires with his high office. It is a heritage of the past that comes to him. When he is installed, he finds a mesh of academic rights, titles, and privileges before him. There are deans, provosts, chaplains, janitors, bursars, secretaries, directors, chairmen of faculties, professors, assistant professors, associate professors, instructors, assistants, lecturers, fellows, scholars, and other incumbents, active, retired, and supernumerary. These are of every kind and condition. Some have been attached to the institution and to their jobs for ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty years. They have their methods, angles, pet affections and spites. Most of them are specialists. The more successful they are in their respective fields, the narrower, as a rule, is their outlook upon the problems and difficulties of the university as a whole. In fact, most of them probably do not care a continental how the institution is managed and the money collected, as long as their salary-checks come in regularly—with proper increments, of course. The younger men are looking forward to promotions with patient or impatient eagerness. They wonder when this old fellow will die or resign or that formidable competitor will

seek an outlet for his energies in other spheres. There are cliques and gossip-associations, busily engaged in promoting this or that interest, legitimate or futile as the case may be. The budget shows a deficit that might make the German Chancellor green with envy. The salary-roll is full, and about as fixed as the stars. The president can no more undertake to clean house, cut away the dead wood, and reward intelligence and vigour (assuming that he might wish to do this), than he can fly. Instead of setting about the task of planning and executing plans, he must address himself at once to the problem of meeting the fixed charges by levies on founders, benefactors, donors, and other tutelary saints. The clamour for promotions and salary-increments beats upon his weary ears with the monotony of the waves along a rocky coast. His first query is why any man should choose for himself "that closely watched slavery which is mocked by the name of power." After the glamour of the inauguration, come the dull duties of the job. Dr. Ghengis Khan hardly knows whether to laugh or to cry, as he telephones to Adam Josephus Richman for an appointment at the latter's own sweet pleasure.

The man who undertakes this job—a college president—is a genus of a species wholly American. How different is his position from that of the rector of a Continental university or the master of an Oxford college!

The master of an Oxford college is elected by the fellows. In passing, if anyone thinks that it is a sweet, innocent, savoury, unpolitical operation, let him read the history of Bentley at Cambridge or Mark Pattison at Oxford, to say nothing about more recent happenings. The American college president is elected by a board of trustees, composed not of academic persons, but of bank-presidents, railway-directors, brokers, corporation-lawyers, and merchant-princes, and a slight sprinkling of clerical persons—an aroma reminding us of ancient days. Now any adult who could pass the Binet test knows that it takes one kind of person to make his way upward through an academic group and another kind of person to command the esteem and admiration of a board of corporation-directors. If history is any guide, we may say that the academic group is more likely to choose a distinguished scholar who has won honour and fame in the world of letters and science. The corporate group, after its own kind, naturally thinks well of the brisk, active, political, and rhetorical person who has not spent sleepless nights over his folios or test-tubes, but who has assurance, presence, and aplomb, who is a good mixer and a good money-raiser. The prospective incumbent must know how to go down to the front seats in the synagogue, how to address miscellaneous associations of a reputable order, how to steer over on the safe side of all public controversies, and how to wheedle the politicians in the State legislature.

In these observations there is no spirit of criticism or recrimination, no more than one will find in Darwin's "Origin of Species." We are concerned with academic data, with the phenomena of academic society, not with the merits of the case. The American college president is elected by a secular, non-academic body. His chief business is to raise money by collecting it from those who have it. He is subject to constant pressure from his academic staff, and must necessarily seek more and more money every year. He must concern himself with the problems of financial and physical administration. He must be a talker, a very circumspect talker, a money-raiser, and an administrator. His fame increases with the millions that pour

into the treasury and the great buildings that rise upon the campus. He is not expected to plan in a large way for the growth and enrichment of the scholastic programme. Indeed, interference with the designs of the respective and competing heads of departments is usually hotly resented. Whenever the president is called into an academic fray, it is to adjust a row between departments in which he suffers defeat, no matter which side wins.

In the purely scholastic field, therefore, his functions, slight as they are, bring him no fame, but usually chagrin and mortification. Each department-head, jealous of his own prerogatives and supported by his retinue of satellites, wants to run his own affairs in his own way. Each department-head asks for more and more money every year. It falls to the unhappy lot of the president to adjust conflicting academic claims upon the treasury. In so doing, he has to settle some matters of policy. He must act without displaying favouritism, or at least without admitting any appearance of it, if perchance he thinks it safe or desirable to play politics himself. In this negotiation with belligerents, the president occupies a delicate position. He must acquire a certain facility in the diplomatic art—an art which at its best works for harmony and good will, and at its worst sinks into miserable chicanery. But let him try with all his might, the college president will hardly escape the imputation of double-dealing. By constantly mediating among contending academic interests, and adjusting contests between the trustees and the scholastic body, he is in mortal peril of losing his soul, if by the time he is elected by the board of trustees, he has one left to lose. Years of this business give him, inevitably, a talent for manipulation that must leave its marks upon his benign countenance.

His problems are made more difficult because his functions separate him from his scholastic brethren. His salary, to start with, is usually two or three times that paid to the professor. He lives in a better house. He keeps a limousine. He must visit and entertain the very rich. He must invite them to his establishment, so that they can look over the institution and pick the exact spot for the realization of their benefaction. His wife must be better dressed and more suave than the wife of the tutor or instructor, for she, too, has her functions to perform. She must be able to smile the sweetest when she fain would curse the loudest. Gradually, the president moves over to the right, accustoms himself to the manners and ways of the rich. He hears their talk, insinuates himself in their good graces and flatters their vanities. It is inevitable that it should be so. The black-coated proletarians in the faculty-room may sniff when the president rolls by in his Packard to visit the moneybags; they may hate the president because he has more of the good things of this world along with his worries; but they will do well to remember that without him their salary-increases and their promotions and pensions would be in jeopardy. If they laugh, they should laugh at themselves. As long as any institution wants to get more money, just so long will it have to send its chief executive out with his high hat in his hand. Let him that is without sin therefore cast the first stone!

What hath all this to do with the kingdom of the spirit, that beautiful realm which we have beheld from afar, and which those who seek after wisdom and understanding fain would enter and possess for themselves for ever? Are we not now a long way off from the days of Thomas Aquinas and Abelard?

SOMNIA VANA.

(To be continued.)

FIRMIN GEMIER.

JEAN FIRMIN GEMIER gave representations at his own theatre, Théâtre Antoine, of "La Bataille," written by Pierre Frondaie. The scene takes place in Japan; the drama is tragic, passionate, full of omens and of surprises; in one word, a sensational melodrama; besides this, the quality that charms one is the exotic atmosphere and the illusions evoked by this atmosphere, and by these almost inhuman beings—a curious mixture of refinement and of decadence. The play was contrived almost after the fashion of living marionettes. Gesture on the stage is the equivalent of rhythm in verse, and it can convey, as a perfect rhythm should, not a little of the inner meaning of words, a meaning perhaps more latent in things.

Gémier did not altogether satisfy me in the part he played. Always, on the stage—and much the same as when, conversing with him in one of the intervals, he spoke to me of his intention of acting Othello—he has his particular, rather uneasy way of speaking, with pauses, and of letting one word slide into another. In his grimace, in his severity, in his dignity and pride, he gave me an idea of what was abnormal, almost monstrous, in the character he acted. So, as I knew he had to act the part of Shylock at the Odéon, I waited eagerly for that night: my anticipations were more than satisfied.

The unerring genius of Lamb wrote: "Marlowe's Jew does not approach so near to Shakespeare's, as his Edward does to Richard II. Shylock, in the midst of his savage purpose, is a man. His motives, feelings, resentments, have something human in them. 'If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?' Barabbas is a mere monster. The idea of a Jew (which our pious ancestors contemplated with such horror) has nothing in it now revolting." In spite of this Swinburne expresses his opinion that only Milton has surpassed the opening soliloquy of Barabbas. "The Jew of Malta," as I have said, belongs distinctly to the school of Kyd, but it is raised above its predecessors, not only by reason of the frequent splendour of its poetry, but still more by the presence of a finely imagined character, an idealization of the passion of greed: what would the play be without Barabbas? It simply would not exist. And yet, probably from Marlowe's haste and hurry in his conception of that character, he debases him in the latter part of it from a creation into a caricature. In "Lust's Dominion," which was issued under the name of Marlowe, but was certainly not written by him, one single character, the villain Eleazar, is drawn with some precision and a certain amount of strength. This is the very quintessence of what John Addington Symonds distinguished as "The Tragedy of Blood"; it is overloaded to an inconceivable extent with hideous crimes; it is saved from one's contempt by a barbaric splendour of horror not untinged with ferocious irony. As for Aaron, in "Titus Andronicus," of which Shakespeare wrote only a few scenes, he is not only indebted to Barabbas, who has an even deeper malevolence; he, like Shylock and Barabbas and Eleazar, has a delight in evil, which amounts to an absolute obsession. "These four villains," I have written, "are the primary types of that long series in which the Elizabethan dramatists attempted to read the problem of Renaissance Italy: of wickedness without moral shame, without natural conscience, wickedness cultivated almost as an æsthetic quality, and attaining a strenuous perfection."

Gémier's sinister genius is revealed in his wonderful representation of Shylock in "The Merchant of

Venice"; it is subtle, strange, original, full of nuances, of reticences, of evasions, duplicities, rages, revolts, submissions. In this one scene he gives almost the gamut of the Jew, the Jew of the Ghetto; not the primitive, nor the animal Jew, not, perhaps, Shakespeare's; but certainly his own. Ghettos always had something curiously fascinating when I came on them in Rome, in Venice, in Prague, in Warsaw. The synagogue in Prague, built in the twelfth century, outside like a monstrous dwelling, inside like a dungeon, made in the image of a wizard's cell, with its heavy walls and low roof, black with age, pierced with narrow windows, its railed-off space in the centre, its narrow seats, its huge candelabra, its suspended cloth or robe, hung with bells like the robe of the High Priest, its bizarre ornaments of copper, as of some idolatry, to which graven images had never lent grace, concentrates in itself all the horror of the Ghetto. The Ghetto swarms about it in a medley of narrow streets and broad empty spaces, a pestilential circle of evil smells and half-naked children, and slatternly Jews and Jewesses, in the midst of shops of old clothes, and houses with coats of arms over their doors and broken ornaments on their walls. Out of the midst of this confusion a narrow street leads to the old burial ground, hidden behind its enclosing walls, where I saw some famous tombs, such as that of Rabbi Loewe, the friend of Tycho Brahe, still heaped with little stones on every ledge, after the Jewish fashion of commemorating the dead. Browning's "Holy-Cross Day" expresses the feeling of the Jews who are forced to attend an annual Christian sermon in Rome; nothing more audaciously sardonic was ever written than the first part of this poem, with its

Fee, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!

Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week!

and

Aaron's asleep—shove hip to haunch,

Or somebody deal him a dig in the paunch!

Look at the purse with the tassel and knob,

And the gown with the angel and thingumbol!

It reminds me of Heine—Heine when he is inevitably cynical.

What struck me was the amazing way in which Gémier grouped his crowd of Jews in the centre of the stage; then the cringing fashion in which they suddenly rise to their feet and form into thick throngs, like a Roman phalanx against its enemies; they went forward, retreated, with gestures and gesticulations; they shouted and cursed. The Jewish girl seated at an open shop reminded me of those in the Merceria in Venice and of those of Valencia in Spain. It is a maze of tall and narrow streets, for the most part with a church at one of their corners. There are whole streets of shops and every shop with its oval signboard, painted with the image of a saint; every shop open to the street, and hung outside with sashes and lengths of cloth and velvet, and shawls, and blankets, and every kind of long, bright stuff. In the Merceria the moving crowds of colour are seen on both sides of the stalls, the central stalls, between the shops, hung with long, coloured stripes. All around are tall, grey houses, with shutters of green; one house, in a corner, has shutters of an intense olive, which seems to soak up and cast back all the sunlight. The faces I saw there were terribly dirty; but in Venice, where everything has its way of becoming beautiful, dirt, at the right distance, gives a fine tone to an old face, like those faces we see in the sketches of Michelangelo, tanned to a sombre red, wrinkled like a withered apple.

Meredith, in "The Tragic Comedians," where he represents Ferdinand Lassalle under the name of Alvan, makes Clothilde (her name was Helena) draw on her recollections of the Satanic so as to identify Alvan under the frightful title of a Jew. "The Jew was to her as flesh of swine to the Jew. Her parents had the same abhorrence of Jewry. Now a manner that clothes itself in the Satanic to terrify cowards is the vilest form of impudence venturing at insolence; and an insolent impudence with Jew features, the Jew nose and lips, is past endurance repulsive."

This digression, which has its legitimate place in my discussion, brings me back to Gémier. He was literally the personification of the Jew—certainly not of "the Jew elect." Original, crafty, cringing, nervously agitated, his voice had every modulation; he used the traditional gesture of the tribe as—in abject fear—they clutch the left sleeve with the right hand. It was most effective; certainly from the theatrical point of view. He sins, he fears, he exults, he despairs, he rages, he hesitates, he recoils; he has crisis after crisis; after which always the man becomes the man. Race cries in him in his thirst for vengeance, in his lust of blood; in a word, in his blood-lust. He is the father, who is defrauded of his daughter; the miser with a passion for gold; a miser who would relinquish I know not how much of his made and stolen goods if he could rescue Jessica. Maledictions pour out of his mouth like the foam of the sea; his craft is shown at times in the gestures of his fingers. An epitome of all the vices, he shows, besides his mockery, his mock humility; before, suddenly, surges from some inner recess, his infallible knife. Above all, he is of the gutter; he is of the Ghetto; in him is the voice of Israel: he is the Sublime Victim.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

RUSSIAN FOLK-WISDOM.

HOW THE CROW SERVED AS A HEN.

THE Crow got tired of crow life, and she thought to herself: "I am a toiling bird, I live by my labour, I sing songs, yet I don't get a fair living. Look at the Hen. Is she of the bird tribe? Only by her feathers. She can not fly, she hasn't a voice; all she knows is how to lay eggs and to cluck. Yet she has a sweet life. They feed her, and pour water for her, and even guard her at night."

And the Crow went to the Master, and said: "Take me, Master, to serve as a hen."

The Master took her. The Crow set out from her nest, came to the chicken-house, perched on the roost, and began to sing her songs; and such things she croaked that all the hens got the shivers and dropped their eggs. The Cock himself lost his voice, to say nothing of the little chicks who just scattered like peas.

Then the Crow thought: "Now that I have sat with all the hens and have sung my songs, let me go out into the yard, stroll about, look at others and show myself for what kind of a fowl I am."

Out came the Crow, and everybody fled for the gates. The Crow thought: "Soon the Master will scatter some feed, and life will become downright hennish."

Presently the Master came and threw some grains. The Crow looked at them closely—clear grains, not a bone, not a stone. Then the Crow went into the chicken-house, sucked out all the eggs and pecked all the chicks. And then how the Master chased her with a stick, and the Mistress with a rolling-pin!

The Crow felt offended: "Is it fair?" she said. "Wherein am I not a hen to the Master? On the roost I sat and sang songs; I strolled through the yard and made myself sociable, and if I stayed longer I might have laid eggs too. Yet see what the Master did! The hens he fed, while me, the Crow, he bruised, so that I, the Crow, have become sick and ailing. If I, the Crow, did not have

my beak and my wings, I should altogether perish. I am not going to serve as a Hen, I am going to live as of old."

And she began to live as of old.

THE BUTTING COW.

A MUZHİK had a butting Cow, and got neither milk nor a calf from her. All she knew was how to wallow in the straw and to butt.

The Muzhik made up his mind to make use of the Cow in some other way, so he led her out into the meadow, fed her green grass, gave her spring water to drink, bathed her cleanly, threw down some hay for her, and said: "Little Cow, little Brownie, be thou to me, the Muzhik, a friend, but to other people—an enemy."

That night a grey wolf fell upon the cowshed. The Cow received that wolf with both her horns, and not only took his life, but even skinned him clear, and gave his hide to the Muzhik in the morning.

Rejoicing, the Muzhik again led the Cow out into the meadow, fed her green grass, gave her spring water to drink, bathed her cleanly, threw down some hay for her, and said: "Be thou, Brownie, unhealthy for my enemies, but with me, the little Muzhik, be thou a faithful little friend."

That night a thief of a muzhik got into the cowshed. Brownie received that thief with all her horns, and the thief could hardly find his way out; with pains fled for his life, and dropped a purse full of money, and in the morning the Muzhik came into the shed, and found the purse.

Rejoicing, the Muzhik again led the Cow out into the meadow, fed her green grass, gave her spring water to drink, bathed her cleanly, threw down some hay for her, and said: "Be thou to me, thy Master, a delight, but to my enemies—a mockery."

That night a husky devil got into the cowshed. How the Cow received him with her horns, mauled the devil's sides, maimed him, pommelled him, trampled him with her feet. If the devil had a soul, he would have given it up then and there. Moreover, she bit off the devil's tail, and it is in the tail that all power lies. If thou swing a devil's tail, all at once the devils will appear, and whatever thou mayest order and desire, that they must do for thee.

In the morning the Muzhik came, found the tail, and when he recognized it—he swung the tail! The house became chuck-full of devils. Pandemonium-sodom arose. The Muzhik ordered this, the Muzhik wished that; and the devils managed everything he ordered.

There gathered a host of devils, and of the Cow the Muzhik forgot. Neither food nor drink—life became unbearable for the Cow! She suffered, endured, but in the end she got tired of it. So she went butting with her horns, and kicking with her feet, and she chased and scattered all the devils; and the Muzhik she pinned to the ground. "If I am," said she, "to be a little friend to thee, then lead me out into the meadow, feed me green grass, give me spring water to drink, wipe me with straw, and then bring me home. But thou, Muzhik, hast become puffed up, ever since thou hast got chummy with the devils, and where sin is, there are devils too." And she butted the Muzhik to death.

THE MUZHİK IN HELL.

ONCE a Muzhik strangled himself because of his malicious wife; he fell straight into hell, and there began to curl up to sleep. He had barely huddled up in a corner, when the Devil pounced upon him, and asked: "Why, Muzhik, dost thou hide in the corner?"

"I," said the Muzhik, "am going to take a rest."

"Ah, thou silly Muzhik: do people go to hell for a rest? Thou art a fool, I can see that."

"Fool, thyself," said the Muzhik. "Is it of my own will that I am here? I don't know how it came about, I just got strangled, and here I am in hell. Well, goodbye, brother, it's time for me to sleep."

"No, brother," the Devil said to him, "once thou hast

done mischief at home, up on the forks with thee, and no sleep. This is no palace for thee."

"Thou art a Devil, Lord forgive," said the Muzhik, "yet art thou a plain dolt. If this were not a palace, then why would I, the Muzhik, have strangled myself?"

The Devil burned to know the reason: "Tell me, do."

"All right," said the Muzhik, "I'll tell thee, but wilt thou later do me the kindness to let me out into the open that I may have my sleep in peace?"

"All right," said the Devil.

"Well, this is how the thing happened," said the Muzhik. "That wife of mine, she's a plump wench but a fierce one. I sit down—get up! I get up—sit down! I say a word—blockhead! I hold my tongue—muttonhead! I begin to eat—hanger-on! I don't eat—snob! I don't drink—calf! I get drunk—demon! Thus we lived soul in soul, only I slept on the bench, and my wife on the stove. Then a certain old woman gave me this advice: 'Build up,' she said, 'a plank-bed, and sleep with thy woman, then you'll get on.' So I built a plank-bed across the whole hut; and then there started a deadly battle between me and my wife, every night. In daytime with her tongue, and at night with the rolling-pin. So I got myself strangled, and—into hell. How happy I felt, seeing my wife wasn't here. Now, I thought, I am going to have my sleep. When, just my luck, thou pouncest on me."

Great pity the Devil felt for the Muzhik: "Sleep," he said, "poor soul. For thee hell is like a cradle." And the Devil covered the Muzhik with a sheepskin, and later even led him out into the open.

Translated by ALEXANDER KAUN.
(The End.)

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

THE TRAGEDY OF VIENNA.

SIRS: It is frequently alleged by persons insufficiently informed that the chief cause of the bankruptcy of the Austrian treasury is the unnecessarily large number of persons in the employment of the Government. Thus the Vienna correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* reported in a recent despatch that "nearly five per cent of the total population of the Republic of Austria is employed by the State—a fact which is as much responsible for the gigantic deficit as the necessity to purchase food-stuffs, coal, etc., from abroad."

The facts of the case are worth elucidating. According to a recent official statement of the Viennese Government, the total number of State employees in Austria is not more than 240,000 persons, which includes not only the entire Austrian army, fixed by the peace-treaty at a maximum of 30,000 (in fact, less than that in number) but also all officials and workmen on the railways of Austria, which are owned by the State, as well as members of university faculties and the employees in the State-owned tobacco- and salt-monopolies. According to the Association of Austrian State Officials, these State employees are divided into the following categories:

46,416 railway-workers	22 %
38,255 " officials	18.3%
30,000 soldiers and officers	14.3%
29,475 civil officials of administration and justice	13.8%
24,554 post-office employees and officials	11.7%
38,255 " officials	11.7%
21,025 executive officials	10.2%
16,287 employees in State industries and forestry	7.8%
3,898 Government teachers	1.9%

And now the Government has passed a bill forbidding the employment of any new officials for any purpose whatever save by special approval of the President, and it is estimated that approximately eight per cent of the civil officials are annually retired either by resignation, dismissal, pension or death.

As I write, a great storm is breaking over the city

drenching the narrow streets and driving people into the shelter of their cold and often cheerless houses. A fall of snow is imminent. In the shops the prices of food-stuffs are rising almost hourly. A loaf of dark bread costs thirty-five crowns, a kilo (two pounds) of potatoes, sixty-four crowns. A can of condensed milk can not be had for less than 500—almost all fresh milk goes to children's institutions and to the sick—and lard that sold at 360 crowns a kilo a few months ago has jumped to 1400. The prices of eleven staple food-stuffs have increased over a hundred per cent in the last few weeks. To mention a case within my own knowledge, the professor's family with whom I live has just managed to pay fifty thousand crowns for a wagon-load of coal.

This is the desperate situation in this wonderful city to-day. It is the worst winter since the war. Death and violence and disease are ready to invade the city and claim the streets where Mozart and Haydn and Schubert and Beethoven and Strauss found inspiration and gave to the world its loveliest music. Violence and death will come without any of the redeeming idealism of a constructive social revolution. Bolshevism has played itself out in Vienna and the Social Democrats are still in control of the city government—to their regret, at least to the regret of those of them who are socialists, I imagine. It is not, however, the wage-earners who are organized and effective, who are the worst hit by present conditions. Through their revolution and their organization they have established the forty-four-hour week—which often means considerably less than that because of the innumerable holidays that are customary in all Catholic countries—and their wages are increased every month in an effort to gain upon the ever rising cost of living. They do, in fact, manage to keep fairly even with it, and the bonus or monthly increase which is given because of the rise in food-prices (*Teuerungszuschlag*) now amounts to much more than the basic-wage in many categories of wage-earners.

It is the professional and middle classes in Vienna, as elsewhere in Europe, who are at the point of despair. It is these people who have given to Vienna its indescribable charm, who are themselves the most amiable and among the most cultivated people in all Europe, who are caught in a kind of golden doom from which there is no escape and who are facing the winter with what fortitude only those who have been privileged to live among them can understand. I sometimes wonder whether people who live comfortably in steam-heated apartments and who go to hear the *Eroica* Symphony or to dance to the music of "The Blue Danube" ever realize what the demoralization and destruction of the gracious civilization which created these masterpieces and their makers mean to Europe and the Western world.

The suggestion that an Anglo-American bank be established here with branches in different Central-European States is a sign of hope. There is no reason why a further step should not be taken and an international currency, adequately guaranteed, be issued. If this were done with the co-operation or assent of various Governments, it would soon win for itself acceptance in half a dozen of the bankrupt countries of Europe, that are now trying to live without recognizing the necessity of free economic intercourse and co-operation, and are, therefore, living very unhappily.

A constructive plan of this kind, or even the mere granting of private credit to Austria and other countries, or to their major industries, combined with a large measure of financial control and fiscal reform, would of itself probably suffice to stabilize the exchange and secure the basis of civilized life while at the same time rendering foreign relief as unnecessary as it is already morally unsound and practically inadequate. Credit-power alone could do much to remake and unify this broken and blundering world without any convocation of futile politicians with their artificial issues. When shall we ever learn to take care of economics and let politics take care of itself? I am, etc.,

Vienna, Austria.

BRENT DOW ALLINSON.

ART.

ART SINCE THE WAR.

It will be many years before it can be said with certainty whether the war had any effect on the evolution of art or whether (as seems far more likely) the unrest, the energy that found its physical outlet in the fighting had not already been working like a leaven in the world of art and had already been given a form of expression which, in days to come, will be found to be the more intelligible and the more lasting. In one tragic sense, to be sure, the war has had its effect on art, for it shortened the lives of the artists. Many, known and unknown, died in the war, and practically all the younger artists in Europe were taken away from their work for a matter of five years. Had this interruption continued indefinitely, we should have had to count on a new generation to keep the art of painting alive.

Fortunately this is not the case, as was proved by certain pictures which were recently on exhibition in New York. I refer principally to the collection of French pictures shown at John Wanamaker's galleries, for it is still to France that we must look to carry on, practically alone, the tradition of the creative idea, the *sine qua non* for art among the peoples of Europe, at least. In this country we are working, as they are in other countries, to attain a condition wherein it will be possible to produce, away from the great modern centre of art, works of art of more than relative value. Already one is encouraged by certain recent achievements to believe that the great ideas of our time are transmissible. It is of interest, therefore, to notice two recent exhibitions of the work of two distinguished American artists before turning to the collection of French work.

Mr. Frank Burty's canvases at the Brummer Galleries are the work of a painter who, though long a resident of France, is an American by nationality and descent. His pictures have been exhibited here before, but few, even among those who had already recognized his talent, were prepared for the admirable examples he sent us this season. They are the expression of a personal vision; and they witness also his understanding of the new realism of our time and his ability to use it.

The other exhibition was of the work of Mr. Frederick R. Shaler, whose life was brought to an untimely close by his death shortly before the end of the war. Mr. Shaler's work is a proof of the strength that resides in modern art, and a proof, also, that this art is accessible to men outside of France. The young American whose evolution was revealed in these pictures was moved by a pure passion for the work to which he gave his life; for his teaching he went to the finest artists of his day; he was of the little group that in recent years brought the ideas of the modern masters to this country and, had he lived, he might well have added an important page to the art records of our nation.

The French painters, with their always old and always new school, have never failed to respond to appreciation from abroad and, at times—as in the cases of Constable, of Jongkind, of van Gogh and today, of Picasso—to derive benefit from the work of foreigners. In the exhibition at Mr. Wanamaker's there were pictures by men from several countries besides France, men who have passed the stage of merely learning in Paris, but are now valued contributors to the movement that centres there. Nevertheless,

it is the French genius that animates this group and that gives a conclusive answer to the question, what has been the effect of the war on art. No one, in looking at the paintings in this exhibition, could suspect that they had been done during the years when the world was occupied with bloodshed and its aftermath. There was no hint of war in the subjects of the pictures, there is no essential change of direction in the art-movements which they represent. If from these works we could infer what was going on in the outer world, it would perhaps be to detect a certain slackening of the speed with which the new artistic movements evolved in the years before 1914. Had the recent work of Picasso, of Gleizes and of Jacques Villon been included in the exhibition we should doubtless have been able to see more of an advance than was actually apparent.

Such an advance, however, is sure to come: it is foretold by the strength of this new work and by the need of the painters themselves to attain a type of art in which they can work for a period without being obliged to make frequent and radical changes. That has been the state of affairs for the last quarter-century at least. There are still sharp differences of opinion as to the value of the latest schools. All can agree, however, on the fact that the vision of the Impressionists or even of the early Post-Impressionists (or whichever of the older groups the observer may wish to take as the last to enter the classical line), is not the vision of the young men of to-day. As the sincere men have had to change their work so often during the last decades in order to express the live thought of the time, the need for a style in which the artist can work in relative tranquillity for a good number of years becomes more and more apparent.

While it would be going too far from our present topic to discuss the reasons for various types of pictures in the exhibition at Wanamaker's, one remark may be made by way of answer to a question which is often asked regarding the value of work in a transitional school. It is the direction of the school that settles the problem. Thus, a century ago, we had the painting of Gros and Géricault—neither one an artist of the first rank, but both alive to the great movement of Romanticism that they heralded—and the work of both of them lives, even though the next generation far outstripped them along their own lines. Sometimes the protagonist of an idea that can not serve for long, is himself a master, as in the case of Courbet, whose work almost completely sums up the moment of pure realism; though Courbet is so vast that we never even think of him as transitional. He is a foundation. As one of the painters in the group which is here under consideration has said, the future will build on the foundation that these moderns have laid.

It is for those who would prove the contrary to show us a different group which can better represent our time—or else they must admit that we are to-day mere decadents repeating the words of past epochs, whose ideas are no longer ours. "Modern art"—and it is significant that both its admirers and its opponents are agreed on that term—has come through the war. It has not reversed its direction, as certain false witnesses have at times asserted. The painting of Matisse, of Derain, Dufy, Braque, Picasso, Gris and others seems richer and surer than when we saw it last. New men are appearing who will carry on the work. It would be unfair to ask for a better accounting from art in these latter years.

WALTER PACH.

MISCELLANY.

I OBSERVE that a strange new species of anonymous advertising has lately made its appearance in the subways, elevated lines and newspapers of the metropolis. These placards and announcements are of two kinds; those which advertise the teachings of Jesus Christ with suitable quotations from the Bible, and those which urge upon the passer-by an optimistic and trustful attitude towards things in general and money in particular. Anyone whose hard fate it is to ride in our public conveyances must have seen these various signs. There are some that speak their message in decorous black letters on a white ground. Their austere appearance is in harmony with their text which runs: "What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Another appeals to the tired strap-hanger thus: "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavily laden, and I will give ye rest." The more secular advertisements continue this appeal to faith in another way and in another language thus: "Good Times Ahead! Industry is speeding up. Prosperity knocks at our door." Or again, "The American dollar is the standard of the world. The United States is bound for Prosperity. Keep busy. Keep others busy. Buy all you need." Meanwhile large advertisements in the newspapers carry on the good work. Under the stirring slogan "The Grand Army of Prosperity," we read as follows: "Judging from the substantial improvement in business conditions in December, 1921, as compared with December, 1920, the forces of optimism, courage and determination have mobilized for an active and aggressive campaign against pessimism and business depression. The main objective is to make 1922 one of the most prosperous years in American history. As the American soldier doesn't know the definition of the word defeat, and success has always crowned his efforts, so the Grand Army of Prosperity is ready to destroy fear and adversity and restore peace and good times." Thus Church and Chamber of Commerce together strive to restore the decaying worship of God and Mammon!

I WONDER whether the great American religion has ever been more succinctly and accurately set forth than in these advertisements. To accept Americanism—to accept it with the ardour of a one-hundred-per-cent mentality, is no longer a choice; it is an instinct of the right-minded. Under the banner of success in religion as well as in business, we have insured our well-being in this world and the next. Marching as in a parade, led by an Elk as the Grand Master of Ceremonies, to the boom of a million Rotarian drums, we ascend to our rightful place as the chosen nation of the world. The smile of a hundred million souls is like shining armour. We are invincible, and our religion is impregnable. Who are those who refuse to keep busy—who refuse to buy all they need—who will not join the "Grand Army of Prosperity"? They are the slackers, the pessimists, the un-Americans, the heathen. It is an amazing religion, compounded of the sayings of Jesus and of such words as success, optimism, prosperity, and dollars. Only a Chamber of Commerce and a latter-day Bench of Bishops could combine these things with that spirit of "push" and "go" which is the modern sign of faith. The pronouncements that these wise men put forth for our edification are unsigned, for it is by their anonymity, like the prophecies of the ancient oracles, that they impress us; and they thus possess a force and conviction beyond any personal verdicts or individual persuasions. They are the edicts of a great, benevolent and infallible system of things.

It is the very essence of this system of things that we all share alike its duties, obligations, and responsibilities, and also its opportunities, rewards and benefits. That is why it is incumbent upon us to be ever optimistic. Optimism, in the bright lexicon of our national cheer-leaders, is patience and long-suffering turned into a hilarious virtue,

into something that is positive and dynamic. Thus we are readily persuaded to put our shoulders to any tasks however useless and however hopeless and to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others—generally a very few others—with the alacrity of hopeful gamblers. Could anything be more rousing, more cheering, more democratic than the latest popular slogan which declares: "This is your country and my country. We fought for it, now let us work for it"? We Americans are made of determined stuff; with implicit faith in the Captains of our "Grand Army of Prosperity"—those two-fisted he-men who are revealed in all their simplicity in our popular magazines of success—we are being mobilized to destroy the forces of "fear and adversity," of "pessimism and business depression." With the vast knowledge of affairs vouchsafed to them, our pastors and masters are nobly living up to the ideal "to keep others busy"; it is our humbler but sufficient task to keep ourselves busy. Thus, I suppose, were built the great cathedrals in a dimmer age; and thus are we building the great corporations to-day.

C. WRITES me as follows: "I had the good luck to hear Arthur Nikisch in Leipzig last Spring. It was the week of the Fair, and several special entertainments had been arranged for the visiting merchants and tourists who had congregated from every part of Germany. Chief among these were a play of Shakespeare's, 'Romeo and Juliet,' I believe; Mozart's 'Magic Flute'; a new operetta, and a concert by Nikisch and the Gewandhaus Orchestra! (Imagine the Chicago Board of Trade arranging a like fare for the edification of the automobile-show salesmen!) The Gewandhaus was, of course, sold out, but I bribed the box-office man, for the equivalent of an American dollar, to put me somewhere. The appearance of Nikisch caused a great demonstration and it was some minutes before he could begin. He had aged markedly since I saw him in New York a year before the war. His hair and beard were now entirely grey. He was dressed, as was his manner, perfectly, with just a touch of the dandy. His bearing scarcely concealed a sense of superiority and he lifted the baton in the manner of a confident prestidigitator fingering gingerly the little 'hokus' stick. A second after his first down beat, the opening C-major chord of the Meistersinger Prelude was not so much struck, as released. This entrance of the orchestra a little after the beat is one of Nikisch's effects and really gave the semblance of releasing sound. His style, as ever, was distinguished for its economy of gesture and the entire avoidance of the 'Svengali' waving of hands and kindred proceedings beloved of even the finest conductors. Nikisch gave the Wagner piece a virile, rhythmic and beautifully balanced reading.

"THE Beethoven Leonore III overture he made breathlessly dramatic. I still remember the hushed phrase after the trumpet call off-stage—played without nuance, and the dazzling virtuosity of the finale. In the latter part of the concert a soprano of mediocre abilities sang a group of songs by Hugo Wolf, Nikisch playing the piano accompaniments beautifully. The sombre beginning of Strauss's 'Tod und Verklärung,' which closed the concert, affected the German audience deeply. They were hearing a glorious mass for their dead millions. Nikisch, too, seemed moved. There was, now, no least hint of ostentation—not even an orchestral 'effect.' Terrifying was the struggle with Death; terrible was Death's victory. Then, out of hollow, subterranean music of winds and basses, rose the Transfiguration. With noble gesture and ineffable serenity Nikisch piloted this theme above the earth, above the clouds, through the seven heavens—and left it shimmering in Eternity. There was no applause. The vast audience left silently. The death of Arthur Nikisch removes the finest interpretative genius of our time. He had planned a tour of the United States for next year. America would have been ready to receive him and ripe to appreciate his genius."

JOURNEYMAN.

THE THEATRE.

MR. GALSWORTHY RETURNS.

THERE are some plays of acknowledged merit and of theatrical effectiveness, which nevertheless seem always destined to achieve comparative failure in the theatre, at least in our theatre. We have recently seen two such works, I think, both of them second attempts to make the dramas "go." In neither case has there been any question of dramatic effectiveness, relative to the effectiveness of many plays which unquestionably do "go," and no serious question of the methods of presentation. Yet, in each case, the play has once more turned out to be that puzzling thing, an admired failure, if we mean by failure a work which does not attract the public in large numbers. Unfortunately, as our theatre is conducted, the public must be attracted in large numbers or the expenses of production can not be met and maintained. One of these plays is "The Deluge," produced by Mr. Arthur Hopkins, and the other is Mr. Galsworthy's "The Pigeon," produced by Mr. Edward Goodman. It may be noted that each play ends on a note of ironic inconclusiveness. Perhaps that is the true explanation of the public's attitude towards them.

"The Pigeon," written when Mr. Galsworthy was at the height of his powers, when his head was cool, his heart warm, and his style simple and direct, was first shown in New York a decade ago, Mr. Winthrop Ames choosing it as the play with which to open his "Little Theatre." Everything was in the play's favour. The theatre was new and beautiful. The cast was a brilliant one, carefully rehearsed. The author himself was present to give his aid. Yet "The Pigeon" was not counted a success, in spite of the fact that after ten years many people can still remember it, down to minute details; and for most people the length of time a work of art holds its place in memory is the surest test of its validity.

Mr. Goodman's revival of "The Pigeon" differs from the original production here in one respect. The title part is played by Mr. Whitford Kane—who acted it in London—and his impersonation has a quality of gentle warmth which was rather lacking ten years ago. Otherwise the play is in quite the same key, though less sharply etched. Mr. Goodman's actresses, especially, one feels, are insufficiently equipped. The production, however, is quite good enough to interpret the play, and to bring it to emotional life. If it does not attract the public, the producer certainly is not the one at fault.

Who, then, is? Here is a drama packed full of the milk of human kindness, a drama which shows us the human side of certain "outcasts"—a tramp, a drunken old cabby, a London flower-girl—and demonstrates, by means of an interesting, lively and richly comic fable, the fact that institutional charity and the repressive measures of the law are alike unable to reach the souls of these outcasts; only the unreflective, undogmatic, spontaneous sympathy of the good-natured artist, the "pigeon" whom they pluck, reaches their souls. After all, what they all want is joy. Wild things, they are, the tramp says; and to try to institutionalize and tame them, to take away their joy without giving any substitute, is merely to invite failure. The attempt is made, and the play ends with its complete failure. It leaves the outcasts where they were in the beginning. We can only assume, then, from the evidence, that the average audience does not relish being left thus in suspense. It wishes a resolution of the

problem; unconsciously it blames Mr. Galsworthy for not giving it one.

There is, of course, a resolution possible to the problem of this play. The Salvation Army could best tell, perhaps, what it is, because they seem to know best how to reach the "outcast" type. The answer, and the only answer, short of some impossible economic miracle which would make the outcasts rich, is to give them a new emotional interest, a rebirth of the spirit which causes them to find joy and freedom in less socially harmful pursuits. The Pigeon, for all his sympathy, was not big enough to do that. But if he had been, in the case, even, of but one of the outcasts, the audience would have felt an escape from the dilemma of the play, from the seeming hopelessness of the situation. The ironic rounding of the tale, to be sure, would have been lost; but perhaps the gain would have been more than worth the loss.

At any rate, plays which, like "The Pigeon" and "The Deluge," or even like Mr. Galsworthy's "Strife," complete a circle and show in the end but the futility of our gestures, appear to be destined to fail on our stage. It is the same instinct, perhaps, which causes us to shun the purely naturalistic, the "slice of life," without beginning or end. We demand a certain finality, a solution. This is, no doubt, a childish attitude, though quite possibly a sign of active self-assurance not at all unlikeable; but however that may be, it seems to be a fact in our psychology which the dramatist can ignore only at the peril of a comparative popular neglect.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

HE REMAINS AN ENGLISHMAN.

SIRS: As I know you like to be in all matters accurate, may I point out to you an error, occurring in your issue of 14 December, in one of Mr. J. Gould Fletcher's interesting reviews, in which he ascribes Mr. Havelock Ellis's freedom of spirit to the fact that he was Australian born and reared. Not at all. We Australians can not claim him as a native son. If you will consult "Who's Who" you will find that he was born in Sussex. He went to Australia in, I think, 1875 and remained till 1879, four years only. They were, however, four memorable years, for he says in the preface to one of his books (I am quoting from memory), that it was while brooding over life's mysteries on the vast plains of Australia, that the idea came to him that he would make it his life work to elucidate the unknown meanings of sex. He adds that although he had not been able to accomplish the stupendous task he had set himself, he had made a beginning. In this we may surely all agree with him. I am, etc.,
Chicago, Illinois. ALICE HENRY.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE.

SIRS: In view of the recent trend of events, and the present international position, there is unquestionably much to be said for your assumption that the Genoa conference is not designed to envisage an honest reconstructive policy for Europe; and one would be especially sure of this if one were in possession of absolute assurances that there is to be a continuance of those influences which at Paris inspired and wrought a covenant of desolation that must now be undone if humanity is to live and function. Nevertheless your article appears to disregard the most evident realities of the present economic prostration at home and abroad—a prostration which is momentarily becoming more and more acute—and also to overlook the fundamental fact that the Genoa conference comprehends the inclusion and voluntary co-operation of Russia and Germany, with all that this latter consideration implies in the way of real economic readjustments and relief.

The preponderance of evidence would seem to warrant the conclusion that the one certain way to increase the existing world-unrest is for America to decline constructive participation in the Genoa conference, thus leaving a world-problem to be solved by Europe alone, with all the disastrous conse-

quences that such a contingency implies. It is almost unthinkable that America should have reached a stage of sordid provincialism and crass statesmanship where such a course of policy would be even seriously entertained in this momentous period in the life of mankind. I am, etc.,
New York City. THOMAS CAMPBELL.

STEPHEN CRANE.

SIRS: Will you allow me to express disagreement with the statement of your Reviewer that Stephen Crane was a minor artist? Crane was more than that. The psychology of his work is unsurpassed by that of any other writer from Shakespeare downwards. The accuracy of his insight and his pitiless detachment, as in "George's Mother," hurt. And then the exquisite beauty of some of his passages, in the earlier pages of "Monster," for example!

It is doubtful if Crane would have given us anything better had he lived longer. That, at least, is Mr. Conrad's opinion. Conrad knew Crane and had a great admiration for his work. Like many good judges of the older generation in this country, Mr. Conrad is puzzled that Crane should have made so little mark on the literary history of his time. The two men had much in common. Both were interested in the colour of life. In my opinion, Crane was, in some respects, the finer artist. Mr. H. G. Wells has written (in "Boon") that Crane was the best writer of English in the last fifty years.

Why has no biography of Crane been written? In this country every fourth-rate man has a new biography of himself written every six months, more especially if he is a politician. There must be dozens of men in America who know all about the life of Crane. A Crane biography might not sell by the hundred thousand, but if it were sympathetically done it would have a ready sale among his admirers. Might it not at least be sold by private subscription? I am, etc.,
Glasgow, Scotland. PETER F. SOMERVILLE.

PEACE AND THE FOURTEEN POINTS.

SIRS: When I recently made the statement that the German Imperial Government did not capitulate because it believed in or accepted the fourteen points but because it was beaten on the field of battle, I was dealing with facts not with rhetoric. I did not think it necessary to weary your readers with a recital of supporting data, but evidently it is. Here are the facts:

1. The fourteen points were available to the German Government long before the last desperate effort of the German army on the west front. If it accepted the fourteen points as a basis of settlement why did it not take up the matter before its sword was shattered in its hands?

2. At Brest-Litovsk the Germans showed all mankind how they viewed the gospel of "no annexations and no indemnities." Their understanding of that "point" was very clear long before 11 November.

3. The German *Weissbuch über die Vorgeschichte des Waffenstillstandes* gives the following facts from German sources:

a. On 14 August, 1918, Ludendorff served notice at an imperial conference "that it was no longer possible to win the war by military means." It was then agreed that a peace-move should be made "at the proper moment."

b. On 10 September the German authorities decided on an appeal to some neutral power to intervene, but Austria blocked that.

c. It was not until 21 September that the idea of appealing directly to America appears in the record—a good second thought.

d. The Military High Command compelled the Civil Government to send the first peace note to President Wilson against the judgment and passionate plea of Prince Max.

e. Prince Max told the High Command that the opening of peace-negotiations under military necessity would cost Germany her colonies as well as Alsace-Lorraine and territory in the East, in spite of the fourteen points. But knowing this, military necessity led the Military Command to force the Civil Government to offer peace. The Military Command was afraid of a disaster in case of longer delay and said so point blank.

To sum up; the Germans knew from Brest-Litovsk the exact meaning of a peace "without annexations and indemnities," they let many months pass after hearing of the fourteen points before suggesting peace on those terms, they were beaten according to the words of their own military officers, they did not think of President Wilson or his points first, but

of an appeal for neutral mediation, and finally they had to appeal for peace, so they naturally tried to make the most of a bad mess. For that they are not to be blamed.

These being the facts, how can anyone who cares for reality instead of words, talk about the peace-treaty as if it were a free-will contract entered into by free and equal agents on the basis of the fourteen points? I am, etc.,
New York City. CHARLES A. BEARD.

IRELAND'S TRIBUTE.

SIRS: The statistics of Irish revenue and expenditure, printed in the *Freeman* of 8 February, while illuminating, fall far short of telling the whole truth. Your figures—official—show Ireland as contributor to British "Imperial purposes" to the amount of £76,783,000 for the five years 1916-1920. Actually the amount so contributed was £102,061,000. Analysis of the figures shows how the discrepancy arises. The revenue expended in Ireland in 1918 amounted to £13,002,000, which is less than half a million greater than the figure for 1916. In 1919, however, the amount expended in Ireland has grown to £22,161,000 and in 1920 to no less than £29,221,000. The explanation of this great increase is that during the two latter years there was included under the head of "Irish expenditure" £25,000,000 (round figures) for "army and navy operations."

In other words, Ireland, for the first time since the merger of the Irish and English treasuries in 1817, has charged against her local expenditures the cost of what can not be described as other than "Imperial purposes." Thus is Ireland made to pay the cost of the army and navy holding her in subjection. Thus, too, does England dishonestly minimize the vast tribute she exacts from Ireland. Thus, too, the correct amount contributed to "Imperial purposes" by "poor Ireland" in 1920 was £37,613,000 instead of £21,394,000 with which Ireland is credited. Thus, also, is Ireland's compulsory contribution to the Imperial Exchequer seven times—not four times—what it was during the war. Your publication of the figures is a real service to the cause of truth, dispelling, as they do, the prevailing impression that Ireland is a financial burden on England. I am, etc.,
Chicago, Illinois.

BERNARD MACGILLIAN.

BOOKS.

THE TRAGIC HUMORIST.

I

"I do not know of a sadder spectacle than that of Chekhov's talent, wasted to no purpose." Such was the opinion of Mikhailovsky, dean and dictator of Russian criticism during Chekhov's lifetime. Mikhailovsky, and with him all Narodnik Russia, failed to see any "good"—hence any *raison d'être*—in Anton Pavlovitch's writings, in his humorous tales, in his lyrical "Steppe," in his melancholy "Ivanov." On the other hand, the Marxians discovered a "purpose" in Chekhov's "Peasants," hailed it as the orthodox thing, and used it as propaganda against the Narodniki. Peter Srue, Foreign Minister under Baron Wrangel, but leading Marxian in the 'nineties, has devoted a special essay to this story, citing its author in support of the inevitability of Russia's capitalization. Radicals and liberals alike, who tried to appropriate him, resented as all but treason Chekhov's friendship with Alexey Suvorin, pillar of reaction and publisher of the most influential and the "blackest" of newspapers. The conservatives, of course, damned Chekhov as a radical. Every thinking person was expected to take sides in the one great national issue of pre-revolutionary Russia—for or against the Tsarist regime. The writer, in particular, the wielder of the sole public weapon under the autocracy, was regarded as a subtle but discernible echo of the surging moods and sentiments of a necessarily inarticulate society. Those few Russian artists of the nineteenth century who by nature or by choice either isolated themselves from social currents, or had the temerity to approve of an unpopular cause, were merely ignored by their contemporary critics and

public. If Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, in spite of their "conservatism," and Chekhov notwithstanding his "indifferentism," did not share the fate of Tyoutchev, Fet, Lyeskov, and other unpopular *dii minores*, it was because of the extraordinary authority of their genius. "With such critics as we have," observes Chekhov in his Notebook,¹ "authors like N. S. Lyeskov and S. V. Maximov can not be a success." Yet Lyeskov was a man to make any literature proud.

In accusing him of lacking a "purpose," old Mikhailovsky gauged Chekhov far more correctly than did the legion of partisans who sought to label him in one way or another. If any doubt still exists as to the constitutional aloofness of Chekhov from "affairs of the day," his Notebook ought to dispel it. In this collection of rough diamonds we see the intimate reflection of the author in his creative solitude. Here we have the artist speaking to himself, jotting down personal memoranda, momentary observations and crystallized opinions. Viewed in his privacy, Anton Chekhov, this son of a peasant, appears even more fastidious, more aristocratic, more removed from the "flies of the market-place" which, in the words of Zarathustra, "beginneth where solitude endeth." To be sure, he lacked a "purpose," in the sense in which this word was used by Russian critics until recent years, in the sense of Zarathustra's words:

... Und auch von dir wollen sie Ja oder Nein.
Wehe, du willst zwischen Für und Wider deinen Stuhl setzen?

Chekhov failed to furnish the critics with the Ay or Nay they desired. There was precious little in Russian life to provoke his assent, while his negation was so profound and inclusive as to preclude any partnership with negators *ad hoc*, with critics of mere forms, and of certain political and economic conditions. There is a Russian folk-saying: "When the head is severed, you don't regret the hair." Of what import to Chekhov were local, partial, temporary evils, since he regarded all life as fraud and folly? His was the objectivity of a physician—which he was by title though not by profession—in a home for incurables, who regards all the inmates with an impartial eye, and treats their virtues, vices, strivings, palliatives, with a sceptical smile not altogether destitute of pity.

The Notebook may serve as an "index" to Chekhov's works—to those he might have written in his usual vein, had he lived to carry out his intentions. There is a mine of nuggets here, in the way of suggestions for stories and plays, which bear the unmistakable Chekhovian mark. There is his humour—that faculty for arousing mirth which brought success to his first sketches signed "A. Chekhonte." His sense of humour never flagged, he retained to the end his keen eye for the comical; yet instead of a humorist *par excellence* he became an exponent of the eternally tragic. The smooth, sunny brow of young Chekhonte was gradually furrowed by a deep vertical line of meditation. For that which is exceptional and strikes us with its unusualness may be funny and laughable; but when, as was the case with Chekhov, the normal and the ordinary assume in one's eye a ridiculous and grotesque aspect, then there is hardly one step from the comical to the tragic.

In Chekhov's "Notebook" one will find hardly any other observations but those of life's stupidity, vulgarity, and ugliness. He notes a woman "with the portrait of a fat German on her bosom"; a woman who "had not sufficient skin on her face; in order to open her eyes she had to shut her mouth and vice versa."

These specimens of femininity appear not at all exceptional when encountered amidst the other grotesques stored up in the Notebook. They blend well, like bits of an exotic mosaic, with such details as in the following epitome of a man's misplaced talent:

A scholar, without talent, a blockhead, worked for twenty-four years and produced nothing good, gave the world only scholars as untalented and as narrow-minded as himself. At night he secretly bound books—that was his true vocation: in that he was an artist and felt the joy of it. There came to him a book-binder, who loved learning and studied secretly at night.

Page after page, Chekhov's word passes before one, a Goya world of bestial anthropoids, of a hideous exterior and psychically base. It is clear that these "exhibits" are not products of the imagination, but conform with the author's actual impressions and experiences; this is shown by his diary which precedes the notes. He has very little joy or happiness to record. The people he meets are for the most part "tedious and incongruous," whether they happen to be conservatives or radicals, educated persons or boors. He enters as an extraordinary event: "Must put down the fact that in Paris, in spite of rain and cold, I spent two or three weeks without being bored." His eye, ever alert to discover the philistine and banal, was evidently less active in a strange place. At home the most significant event in his life, a relief from the surrounding boredom seems to have been his friendship with Tolstoy; although Chekhov is too reserved to be explicit in his emotions. Such laconic entries as, "I was at L. Tolstoy's," or "Talked to L. Tolstoy over the telephone," indicate the importance Chekhov ascribed to his communion with the great man. Abhorrence of the present must have caused Chekhov's interest in the future, an interest shown repeatedly in his plays and expressed in a conversation with Kuprin.

Regarding life as he did, it was natural for Chekhov to preserve his aloofness and objectivity not only in his intercourse with people, but also in his art, where he re-created these people. He fulfilled Flaubert's belief, "*que l'artiste ne doit pas plus apparaître dans son œuvre que le Dieu dans la nature.*" Russia, where personal leadership is expected and demanded from the writer, has shown its appreciation of the service performed by Chekhov's objective art. In the fall of 1904 public meetings were held throughout the country, which served as a prelude to the revolution of the following year, and nearly all of these meetings concluded with a saying taken from Chekhov, who had died a few months before: "Such a life one can not, one must not live!"

II

In his "Reminiscences of Anton Chekhov," Maxim Gorky writes: "I think that in Anton Chekhov's presence every one involuntarily felt in himself a desire to be simpler, more truthful, more oneself . . ." Chekhov had the clairvoyant power of divining human weaknesses and interests, and he knew how to lead his visitors away from making pompous, pretentious, prepared speeches to talking naturally and unaffectedly in their own manner. Then he would listen with a sad smile on his tired face to animated discussions of candied fruit, phonographs, photography, parochial gossip. Who knows but what his visitors went away bettered, inspired to be "simple and truthful." But who can measure the weariness brought upon Chekhov by all these nice ladies, earnest high-school students, village teachers, soldiers, and suave, soulless lawyers. Russian life

¹"Reminiscences of Anton Chekhov." Maxim Gorky, Alexander Kuprin, and Ivan Bunin. New York: B. W. Huebsch. \$1.50.

²"Notebook of Anton Chekhov." New York: B. W. Huebsch. \$1.50.

knocked at his door, the life he knew too well and hated heartily.

His enemy [says Gorky] was banality; he fought it all his life long; he ridiculed it, drawing it with a pointed and unimpassioned pen, finding the mustiness of banality even where at first glance everything seemed to be arranged very nicely, comfortably, and even brilliantly. . . .

"Banality" does not express the full meaning of the Russian word *poshlost'*, a vile-sounding word which stands for a combination of philistine smugness with meanness, vulgarity, and commonplaceness. Gorky, Kuprin, Bunin, and all those who knew Chekhov, speak of his intense hatred for *poshlost'*. To be sure, the only moral the reader can draw from this writer without a purpose is the duty, the categorical imperative, to hate and combat this enemy which is so powerful in our era of conglomerated mediocrity. Chekhov was too retiring, much too reserved, to speak of his affections and aversions; only in his Notebook do we encounter an occasional terse sentence which suggests the deep ache he carried in his heart. Here and there in these "Reminiscences" we read of moments, when the gentle, sensitive Chekhov could not hide the pain he felt in the presence of vulgarity and baseness. He would grow pale, his lips would quiver, and once, in a particularly extreme case, he reproached the offender, "Are you not ashamed?" Ordinarily Chekhov regarded life and the human race with that autumnal smile of his, which seemed to signify the futility of taking anything seriously. But who can gauge the strain that was hidden behind that silence, behind that smile, behind that tolerant attention to those shallow visitors? A physician himself, Chekhov measured the pulse of his contemporaries, displaying professional impartiality and indifference, while he breathed all the foulness of his environment, of contemporary *poshlost'*. In the words of the poet-tramp, Skitaletz, Chekhov carried in his breast a "hard disease—all our life," he drank deep of sorrow, and "was poisoned with the melancholy of our life."

Chekhov's quiet, chaste, autumnal art won recognition but slowly. He gained the love and devotion of his countrymen not because of the Russian critics, but in spite of them. Gorky's early sketches were hailed by the leading critics, even by Brandes. Andreyev was received in the same way. The harm wrought by these enthusiastic critics upon their favoured writers can not be estimated, at all events, not in this article. Merezhkovsky compared the effect of laudatory criticism upon a writer with that of the hugging embrace of a gorilla on a child. Be this as it may, Chekhov felt quite independent of the critics, and far from beholden to them. Gorky quotes Chekhov on this question:

Critics are like horse-flies which prevent the horse from plowing (he said, smiling his wise smile). The horse works, all its muscles are drawn tight like the strings on a double-bass, and a fly settles on his flanks and tickles and buzzes . . . he has to twitch his skin and switch his tail. And what does the fly buzz about? It scarcely knows itself; simply because it is restless and wants to proclaim: 'Look, I too am living on the earth. See, I can buzz, too, buzz about anything.' For twenty-five years I have read criticisms of my stories, and I don't remember a single remark of any value or any word of valuable advice. Only once Skabichevsky wrote something which made an impression on me . . . he said I would die in a ditch, drunk.

As one might expect, the writers of these "Reminiscences" project their own personalities into their narratives. Maxim Gorky is seldom altogether free from the note of propaganda: hence his Chekhov resembles some of his own heroes who deliver long and noble speeches. One does not question Gorky's good faith, but the monologues of Chekhov which he reproduces between quota-

tion marks provoke sceptical reflections on the faithfulness of biographies and memoirs. Alexander Kuprin is the best Russian raconteur, and he remains true to himself in these entertaining reminiscences of Chekhov. He adds some valuable details to the portrait of the master, and in his description of Chekhov's eyes Kuprin is at his best. Perhaps the nearest in temperament and style to Chekhov is Ivan Bunin, and for this reason the latter's brief remarks give us the most intimate glimpse of the sad, lonely artist. The reader feels Bunin's deep reverential love for his dead friend, and appreciates his reserve and unobtrusiveness. The scene of the two writers brooding in the moonlight on the sea-shore, a short time before Chekhov's death, is gripping in its Chekhovian *Stimmung*. Bunin knew what a burden life had been to the sadly smiling Anton Pavlovich, when after his death he recalled the words of Leconte de Lisle:

*Moi, j'ai l'envie, au fond du tombeau calme et noir
D'être affranchi de vivre et de ne plus savoir
La honte de penser et l'horreur d'être un homme!*

ALEXANDER KAUN.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

THE charm of the English countryside is evoked in Mrs. de Bunsen's "Old and New in the Countryside." Her method is not to particularize, she draws types rather than individuals, but she has in her own fashion re-created the mind and heart of a class that is passing away, the English landed gentry, owners of stately mansions in Belgravia and spacious country-seats, a society definitely set within its own boundaries, with its own interests and limitations and its own peculiar view of itself and the world in general. Mrs. de Bunsen writes with the knowledge born of personal experience. She shows the dignity and graciousness of lives spent in discharging public duties and tempering them with personal care and thought, the good humour born of complacent self-satisfaction; but at the same time she lays bare the basic falsities on which the whole edifice reposed, the assumption of superiority, the class-discrimination, the ignorance and snobbishness, the conviction that anything in the nature of reform is necessarily iconoclastic.

Mrs. de Bunsen next follows her county families up to town. She reproduces the smug aloofness and pompous quietude of the London of the 'eighties and 'nineties. London society of those days was, as she says, "a compact body," still "mentally homogeneous," a domestic society, waited upon by "footmen with shining calves of white silk and blue plush breeches," and for ever progressing, in well equipped broughams, from a round of "at homes" to heavy dinner parties. "There was," she says, "a distinct stirring of the social consciousness in the 'nineties. But there was nothing to indicate the social ferment to which this was the quite harmless prelude. No one had begun to feel in the least uncomfortable." As for politics, it made little difference whether the family traditions were Whig or Tory. "The general outlook on life was uniformly similar, and the superficial disagreements served only to lend savour to intercourse."

Different in treatment, but equally true to life, are Mrs. de Bunsen's chapters dealing with the country town, "the last stronghold of the vested interests." With telling irony, the author draws back the veil of the picturesque and reveals the realities of existence in those little, old, historically interesting places where "stagnation and listlessness have a peculiar charm of their own." Relentlessly she depicts the evils of absentee landlordism; the crowded, insanitary slums often owned by the local magnates. She reveals "the failure of small-town democracy"; the abuses of local government, the tyranny of the churches, and the evils which would be combatted in the cities and have no *raison d'être* in village life.

¹"Old and New in the Countryside." Victoria de Bunsen. New York: Longmans, Green and Co. \$3.25.

Lastly, she takes us back to the peace and repose of the Old Hall—this time to bid farewell to it, for a time of change has come. The meaning has gone out of the old life; for those who have come to realize the power of the new social forces, the old ways of privilege and patronage have become shameful. But while welcoming the new order, Mrs. de Bunsen closes on a note of wistful tribute to all that was best in the world of yesterday. She feels poignantly, and perhaps truly, that the beauties of the old home that is to be broken up can never be loved in quite the same way by the new generations.

They have not watched breathless for the hatching of the coots' eggs on the pond; they can not tell you which trees the starlings will roost in to-night; they do not know the place by the brook where first the white violet blooms in March.

B. U. BURKE.

THE ART OF THE PANTOMIMIST.

To an alien critic Mr. Alfred Kreymborg's verse might seem too lowly for comment even; the verses are as if somebody out of the nursery were making Mother Goose rhymes:

We birds—
we hop—
and then peck and coo—
humans keep their feet on the ground!

We bulls and cows—
we lick—
and then lap and moo—
humans keep their tongues in their cheeks!

Pooh—
but they
have still much to learn
about loosening!

But these verses are brief, and in the bulk of "Blood of Things" we have a sense that Mother Goose has become garrulous. How did such garrulity get into print, one wonders! On pages 80-81 the titles are "Cigar Butt," "Letter-Box," "Dust," "Park-Bench." On pages 82-83 the titles are "Weighing-Machine," "Dung," "Electric Sign." There is something about these pieces, however, that keeps one in humour; a comment drops out that is worth something; then there seems a hesitancy about them; the speaker is ingenuous and he hopes he is going to say something that will be salient; you sympathize and listen.

But if you go through "Blood of Things," and then read "Plays for Merry Andrews" you will discover that Mr. Kreymborg has a distinct art. It is not the art of lyric poetry, it is not properly the art of dramatic poetry; it is the art of the pantomimist, and the words and lines he uses are a by-product; they are the improvisations of the man who pulls the strings of the marionettes, and they are to the accompaniment of some instrument of the booth.

Mr. Alfred Kreymborg's is a folk-art, but it is a folk-art of the city, and better than any other poet he can give us the queer life of the basement. There are two basement-pieces in "Blood of Things" that are really impressive—"Chess-Players" and "Miss Sal's Monologue." Sal is a potato-peeler, and like most of Mr. Kreymborg's figures we see her as a marionette grotesque. We feel that she has never said anything else and will never have anything more to say than what is in this monologue. The potatoes that she peels come to share in the stringed life that she has, and we see them in all their grotesqueness and in all their malignant number. What can one isolated human do in this Trollheim?

and day after day after day after to-morrow,
when I die—
I know that too—
it being my day—
you can't tell me,
I know that they'll peel off some earth,
and stick me under,
and that'll be an end to peeling—
I know that too—
yes—
no—no—

¹"Blood of Things." Alfred Kreymborg. New York: Nicholas L. Brown. \$2.00.

²"Plays for Merry Andrews." Alfred Kreymborg. New York: The Sunwise Turn. \$2.25.

not if the wind use the rain,
Mr. Wind use Mr. Rain
for still another knife
to come peeling some more.

In "Chess-Players" we have a poem that has more depth, a poem that has both tenderness and geniality, and that stands out as the most human of all Mr. Kreymborg's poems. He shows us the chess-players who "live in old damp basements," and he shows them to us as old, "older than the patriarchs, older than the Bible and as old as Israel." He shows us the veteran of the game "as they stretched him on two tables for the first move to the grave," and he shows us the chess-players as they carry on—

They dug their clinking nickels out of vests and up from trousers
to dig a checkered plot for Spielmann who beat Steinitz!
(No Potter's Field takes king or pawn
from Grand Street off the Bowery!)

In the "Plays for Merry Andrews," Mr. Kreymborg's art is quite revealed. He is not successful in all of the five plays, for "Uneasy Street" and "The Silent Waiter," are too representational, too nearly related to the ordinary one-act play. But "Vote the New Moon," "At the Sign of the Thumb and Nose," "Monday" are plays that belong to a different genius—to a *Commedia dell' Arte* made over again. The action of these plays have the proper distance from reality; the language and the scenes take such regular patterns that one perceives an art that has really been mastered. The lines spoken in the play make fresh and vivid dialogue. They should be performed by players who would imitate marionettes; played in this way they could go as comedy with some of Mr. Yeats's austere "Plays for Dancers." Mr. Kreymborg clutters up his work with much that is merely garrulous, but in the "Plays for Merry Andrews" and in his poems he has created a form of his own, and he has developed a distinctive art. Now that he has made a place for himself he can afford to be more reserved in his output.

PADRAIC COLUM.

SARDINIAN DAYS.

If the ideal book of travel is one that exhibits a temperament before a shifting background, the search for the ideal need not be carried beyond Mr. D. H. Lawrence's latest volume, "Sea and Sardinia." Mr. Lawrence spent a rapid week in that island, and he confidently puts himself through all his familiar paces. He exhibits a temperament indeed; whether it is just the temperament one would enjoy on close association, remains a question.

In an early chapter Mr. Lawrence registers his horror of "tension." Yet tension is precisely his long suit. Readers of his earlier book, "Twilight in Italy," need not be reminded of its colossal straining towards philosophical and æsthetic significance, and will recall how Beauty was captured by assault—roped, thrown and branded, with a superabundance of grimacing, sweating and panting by the chief performer. "There, I've done it!" he seemed to be saying; "but, frankly, I don't like every phase of the dirty job. Yet kindly note, if you will, all my contortions and incidental sufferings." One wonders if Beauty is to be secured on just such terms.

The strain of the new book is slightly different, and is differently distributed. We have, indeed, all the agonizings and repugnances incident to a tour in a remote and primitive land; but the strain is rather that of a tense, unremitted attention. One wonders that, in so short a time, so much should have been observed, felt, recorded. It all points to an abnormal sharpening of the senses and to an exaggerated stimulation of the sensorium. One wonders, again, if Beauty could not be wooed in quieter fashion.

Throughout the entire experience the reader is amazingly "present"; he, too, sees, hears, exults and suffers, as the author plunges tempestuously and self-centredly through his multitudinous loves and hatreds. Mr. Law-

¹"Sea and Sardinia." D. H. Lawrence. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$5.00.

rence, praising granite, must needs "hate" limestone; so we forget the blessed travertine of the Apennines and scramble after him. He hates khaki as a "rabbity protection-colouration": we obligingly agree to detest the hue of service and courage. He hates "sights," preferring a place without "a bit of Perugino or anything Pisan": we recoil on the instant from Tuscan towns and Tuscan pictures. He hates the term "*cristiani*," presenting a priest or two in aid of his case: we willingly become "Turks," which is the only alternative, it seems, in the historic Mediterranean. He hates the "*cambio*," or rate of exchange, which exposes the travelling Briton to daily insult and outrage: we begin to objugate France and to cast half-friendly glances towards "*la Germania*." He hates badly spoken French: we forget how the Englishman, ever since touring began, has prided himself on the Englishness of his French accent, and we curse the ambitious, mistaken creatures who so torment fastidious ears. . . .

Yes, we do all this. Or perhaps we don't.

To be just, Mr. Lawrence's likings are as strong as his hates. Both too high-keyed, but both abundantly there. He loves the stark scenery of this far-away island; he gloats over sunrises and sunsets, by sea or by land; he rushes pell-mell after "costume"; and on occasion he can rise easily and naturally into the poetic. Hear him on the fig tree:

Another naked tree I would paint is the gleaming mauve-silver fig, which burns its cold incandescence, tangled, like some sensitive creature emerged from the rock. A fig tree come forth in its nudity gleaming over the dark winter earth is a sight to behold. Like some white, tangled sea-anemone. Ah, if it could but answer! or if we had tree-speech!

And just as easily as he slides into poetry he slides into sex. Sometimes he is glaring; sometimes happily obfuscated. Occasionally it comes in the guise of comment on social manners, as when, a motor-bus having stopped for lunch, the lady in the party is treated to—and with—a "sensitive, manly simplicity" which helps to relate the Sardinian to the Spaniard and to remove him quite from the abominated Sicilians:

They made none of the odious politenesses which are so detestable in well brought up people. They made no advances and did none of the hateful homage of the adulating male. . . . Men who can be quietly kind and simple to a woman, without wanting to show off or to make an impression, they are men still. . . . Middle-class, showing-off people would have found them uncouth. I found them almost the only really well-bred people I have met.

In the apparent absence, save as here noted, of Sardinian culture (or of any acquaintance with Sardinian civilization), our author concentrates on other matters: scenery, people, and his own highly sensitized, exacting self. Some of his people, in particular, are wonderfully well rendered. Readers of Mr. Lawrence's short story, "The Prussian Officer," will recall his great capacity for expressing combined psychical and physical distress. The same, in lesser measure, here. You learn what it is like to be an elderly woman who loses her train by strolling too long in the town at a stop, and what it is like to be the frantic husband who has to go on without her. You feel the torturing discontents and ambitions of the motor-car's "bus-mate" who, though he has not yet learned to drive over the almost trafficless roads of a remote, half-empty island, pants for the career of a chauffeur in London, or even in America. And the "bounders"! How they abound indeed, and how they torment us everywhere! Sometimes a prosperous "*girovago*," or wandering pedlar; sometimes an out-and-out commercial traveller. How loud, how familiar, how cheeky, how inquisitive, how lacking in table-manners, how insistent about the "*cambio*." . . . So annoying, all this, to a man who was once lower middle-class, but who has now escaped to a fairer life! No wonder we show our exasperation by a decisive bolt into the skittishness of *pointillisme*; with our dabs and dots and dashes what miracles—sometimes rather distasteful—we are able to accomplish!

The eight illustrations, by Jan Juta, call for a few

words. They are poster-like, done in the flat with primary colours chiefly. Each one presents a Sardinian type, which is given in duplicate, triplicate, or more. By the terms of the scheme, male and female are segregated—a peculiarity that can not have escaped the author's notice. In their effect these pictures are "special" enough for a rather special book; and the binding harmonizes with them.

Well, Mr. Lawrence has his Italy, just as you have yours and I have mine. I am glad, on the whole, that he should have chosen to indulge himself in a country I have never visited and never shall visit. To have him serve up, in his peculiar fashion, some of one's favourite haunts, would not be an unadulterated pleasure. I should not care to find him exercising his powers in the Villa d'Este, nor even on the Pincian Hill; while to encounter him Lawrencing on the Pisan Lung' Arno might drive me out of Pisa, or even out of Italy itself.

All of which need not influence unduly those who possess another tone and temper. This is the day of the outspoken, the sensational, the highly individualized. The adventures of a soul among landscapes are more *en règle* than ever before. A burning word from an overcharged bosom may be in place on Como, or a bit of excruciated abandon seem in tone with the quiet presences of Pæstum. But a lesser degree of psychical torsion might seem to suffice.

HENRY B. FULLER.

THE HOUSE OF ISLAM.

IN Dr. Lothrop Stoddard's "New World of Islam"¹ and Mr. Talcott Williams's "Turkey: a World Problem of To-day"² the same problem is discussed from slightly different points of view. For the ferment which is now agitating the world of Islam is also profoundly affecting the future of Turkey. Professor Williams, as the son of an American missionary born in Turkish territory, believes that America lost a golden opportunity of serving the cause of civilization when the Congress of the United States refused to accept the mandate over Armenia: and, indeed, over the whole of Asia Minor. The popular vote, however, has decided the matter; and it is hardly likely that conversion will be effected by the arguments which Professor Williams adduces with much force and persistence. His book is, nevertheless, well worth reading: for the author possesses a deep and accurate acquaintance with the medley of tongues and races which were included in the old Ottoman Empire.

Dr. Stoddard's book is wider in its scope. He observes that not only Turkey, but the whole of the vast region from Morocco to China, and from the Congo to Turkestan, is in the throes of a gigantic transformation which has been in silent progress for a generation, but which, under the stimulus of the war, is fast developing into a menace to the hegemony which the West seems determined to impose upon the East. It is a large and fascinating subject: and Dr. Stoddard has brought a wealth of material to bear upon it. Here and there, however, certain recent facts appear to have escaped his notice. Thus, in referring to the Pan-Islamic conference which was held at Sivas in Anatolia early in 1921 to arrange a plan for Moslem world co-operation, Dr. Stoddard speaks of the Sheikh El Senussi as presiding over the conference. But the gentleman in question is no longer at the head of that mysterious organization whose stronghold at Jôf lies hidden in the heart of the Lybian Sahara. He was deposed after the abortive Senussi invasion of Egypt in 1915 and is now a refugee with the Turkish Nationalists. His successor, Sidi Idris, was visited at Jôf by Mrs. Rosita Forbes in November, 1920, who reports him to be "almost worshipped" by the Senussi brethren, who support him in his belief that neither Britain nor Italy dare threaten his spiritual authority or his rule over the desert which the fraternity has done so much to reclaim.

¹"The New World of Islam." Lothrop Stoddard. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.00.

²"Turkey: a World Problem of To-day." Talcott Williams. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company. \$3.00.

Similarly, it may be suggested to Professor Williams that he fails to appreciate the trend of Moslem feeling when he describes the establishment of the Kingdom of the Hedjaz as promoting the internal peace and development of the world of Islam. Rightly or wrongly, this is not the view taken by millions of Mohammedans. The Grand Sherif of Mecca held his office before the war by appointment from the Ottoman Sultan who made it in his capacity of Khalif, or Commander of the Faithful, and the Sherif was regarded with respect by Moslems everywhere because he was a member of the Koreish or the tribe of the Prophet, and because he was the custodian, under the Khalif, of the Holy City. The Sherif's revolt against the Khalif has filled the orthodox with horror. Neither his establishment as King of the Hedjaz, nor the enthronement of his son Feisal as King of Mesopotamia will heal the wounds caused by the treaty of Sèvres.

That is the *fons et origo* of the discontent which is filling the world of Islam to-day: and nowhere can it be studied with more completeness than in the chapters devoted by Dr. Stoddard to India. The Khalifat movement is not easily intelligible to the Western mind which finds it hard to understand why the wrongs of the Turk should make so potent an appeal to Moslems in Malabar and Bombay and the Punjab. The "Young Turk" is certainly not an orthodox follower of the Prophet, and Mustapha Kemal himself is, as Professor Williams reminds us, reputed to be of Jewish descent; the fact remains, however, that Turkey is the last of the Islamic States to preserve its independence. Not one of the Sultans at Constantinople, since the time when Selim the Grim united the spiritual and temporal elements in the House of Othman, has fulfilled all the requirements laid down for the office of Khalif. Moreover, the Moslem world is sharply divided into Sunnis and Shiah— the former accepting the pontificate of the Ottoman dynasty, and the latter, who include the Arabs and the Persians, believing that the Kalifate is in abeyance, pending the advent of a Messiah who will complete the work of the Prophet and convert the entire universe to the true faith. But the great majority of the seventy million Moslems of India are Sunnis, and nothing will persuade them that the Osmanli who has been their Khalif for 450 years, has ceased, or should cease, to occupy that office.

It is essential, in this connexion, to remember also that Islam prides itself upon taking no account of territorial divisions. Patriotism, it has been said, causes a man to love his own country, and nationalism to hate all other countries. The Moslem distributes his love and his hate on different grounds. All predominantly Moslem lands constitute the House of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and are the joint possession of all believers. They are theirs to inhabit and theirs to defend against encroachment by the infidel who dwells in the House of War (Dar-ul-Harb). An Egyptian "nationalist" may, therefore, be a Mohammedan of Algiers or Damascus who has settled in Cairo; and the grievances of the Turk become by a similar process a matter of intimate concern to the Moplah fanatic and the Afghan *ghazi*.

An appreciation of these considerations illuminates the speech made by Mahomed Ali, the Indian "Kalifat" agitator at his recent trial at Karachi. The British Government, he said, had shown hostility to Islam; by its attitude towards all Moslem States during the past ten years; by the breaking of its promises regarding the custody of the Holy Places (which include, not only Mecca and Medina, but Jerusalem); and lastly, by its condonation of the Greek campaign against the Angora Nationalists. A *jihad*, or holy war, must therefore be declared. It may safely be affirmed, however, that the promised Republic of India is not likely to materialize yet awhile. In any case, its arrival will not be hastened by the incongruous alliance of the Moslem leaders with Mohandas K. Ghandi, the Hindu mystic. To that incongruity none is more fully alive than the principal parties. Islam is nothing if not democratic: Hinduism offers its absolute antithesis, with its "twice born" sacerdotal caste and its millions of "untouchables."

The truth is that it is easier to find points of contact between Islam and Christianity than between Islam and Hinduism. Dr. Stoddard recalls that the Prophet regarded himself as the successor of Moses and Jesus, and enjoined for Christians and Jews ("Peoples of the Book") a very different degree of respect from that which he provided for "idolators." If advantage is to be taken of this sentiment, the treaty of Sèvres must be put upon the scrap-heap. To restore Turkey to the position which she occupied in 1913, is out of the question, but a curb can be placed upon French policy in Syria, a halt may be called in the process of "Zionizing" Palestine, the strangle-hold of Greece upon the "home lands" of Thrace and Smyrna must be relaxed; above all, it must be recognized that eighty per cent of the population of Asiatic Turkey is Mohammedan. Guarantees for the protection of the Christian minority should be demanded, but to attempt to extend Western rule over regions which contain a Moslem majority is simply—as Professor Williams puts it—to use a can of TNT as a cornerstone.

As Dr. Stoddard warns us in his final chapter, the Eastern nationalist is being left between the devil of Bolshevism and the deep sea of Western imperialism. His antipathy to the latter is incurable; but with the former the consequences would be catastrophic.

H. E. A. COTTON.

SHORTER NOTICES.

WRITING of the poetic temper of Englishmen, Mr. G. K. Chesterton has said: "They can sing in chorus, and louder than other Christians: but they must have in their songs something, I know not what, that is at once shamefaced and rowdy. If the matter be emotional, it must somehow be also broad, common and comic." This is a dictum that not many will accept unreservedly in its original application, but one that applies, as if written to order, to "Songs of the Cowboys," an anthology of Far Western ballads, by Mr. N. Howard Thorp, a veteran cattleman of the South-west. In the appropriate setting of a bunk-house or a pre-prohibition saloon, bawled by a picturesque fellow in a five-gallon hat and angora *chaperreras* these ballads are no doubt effective, but lifted from the native scene and decolorized on the printed page they can have little charm or interest for persons unacquainted with the *locale*. For there is in these quasi folk-songs none of the ingenuous emotion that makes the balladry of other nations so appealing. Our all but vanished pastoral life was peopled by men and women who were neither children nor adults, but boisterous adolescents who eased their self-consciousness in horse-play and horse-laughter. It is not at all their "un-literary" quality that makes their songs such highly perishable goods, for the crudest peasant doggerel can become classic, after its fashion, if it has the dignity of genuine, deep and universal emotional experience behind it. If there was an opportunity for such experience on the American frontier, it was neglected for the chance to make money and achieve power in a rapidly developing country. Few enough were successful in the material way, but every one cultivated a keen eye to the main chance; a kind of vision that never falters for a momentary examination of the human heart. The former cowboy has become a smart travelling salesman, a member of the board of trade, or a Rooseveltian politician. These songs are the "shamefaced and rowdy" ballads of his recent adolescence.

E. T. B.

THE little-theatre movement in America is probably responsible for the conversion into plays and playlets of a quantity of material which would otherwise have found an outlet in fiction—some of it because it is too good for the commercial theatre and some because it is, not necessarily too bad—that seems hardly possible—but too immature and indecisive. Most of the plays in Miss Alice Brown's volume² fall into the latter category. They are, for the most part, milky trifles and essays in the more obvious sentiments, but the dialogue in the Old Ladies' Home has a certain comic poignancy and the little tragedy unfolded in a cabaret by a group of men waiting around a dying girl is an interesting study in dramatic form. "Aria da Capo" by Miss St. Vincent Millay is far too good, that is, too esoterically good, for any conceivable big theatre.

¹ "Songs of the Cowboys," an Anthology by N. Howard Thorp. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.65.

² "One Act Plays," Alice Brown. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.25.

³ "Aria da Capo," Edna St. Vincent Millay. New York: Mitchell Kennerly. \$1.50.

It is an acrid, aching commentary on the world we live in; on the confusions of the simple and the frustrations of the complex which between them compose the tragedy of modern human society. It is "War and Peace" reduced to a villanelle; a savage satire made shapely by a stringent economy of detail and conventionalized into a decorative design of phrase and gesture. But Miss Susan Glaspell's "Inheritors"¹ ought to be a popular play, in the best sense of the word. It should be the first play in the repertory of an American National Theatre. It is the first play we have seen which conveys an impression of America as a living organism, not an agglomeration of second-hand cultures but a nation in the sense in which Ireland is a nation. Miss Glaspell sees through the froth and scum of modern America deep down into the hidden springs of national character. Her love for her country, her faith in its possibilities, rather than its actualities, is not the easy patriotism of a politician, it is the deep and passionate nationalism of a poet.

V. G.

A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

My memory of Mr. John Butler Yeats goes back to 1908, to a little gaslit bedroom in the old Grand Union Hotel, whither I had been taken to meet the "father of the poet." At that time the Irish Literary Revival was at its height, and there were no names more glamorous than Yeats and Synge. The "father of the poet," with his air of a benevolent sage, looked the part to perfection; looked it and spoke it indeed so perfectly that he shone at first only with innumerable reflected lights. He had come to America for a fortnight; he was to stay for thirteen years. He was to experience between the ages of sixty-nine and eighty-three a second career as affluent as the first. How soon it was to be forgotten that he was the father of the poet at all! In that early time—it was natural enough—he pulled for us at all the strings of association. If he had not seen Shelley plain, he had been as an art student a commensal of Samuel Butler and William Morris; he had been one of the first Whitmanians—Whitman sent him his "affectionate remembrance" in a letter of 1872; for forty years he had agreed with York Powell and disagreed with Edward Dowden; he had known the father of Wilde and the mother of Shaw. All these recollections he poured out for us in the most enchanting stream of anecdotes—he was fairly lost for us, I say, in his own good talk.

His earlier career, to be sure, had been wanting in no element of the illuminative, when it was not the paradoxical. It was the career, as rumour told us, of genius in solution, or at least not too forbiddingly crystallized, the career of being human to such a tune that two generations of Irish poets and artists had grown up literally under its wing. The story of Mr. Yeats's Dublin studio is to be found in Miss Katharine Tynan's autobiography and I do not know how many other books, just as the record of his influence is to be found in his elder son's "Reveries over Childhood and Youth." Never, surely, had a man been more the cause of a more various wit in others, and this without prejudice to his having been—shall I say?—the minor Reynolds of a stirring age in his nation's history. He had painted all the distinguished, the interesting, the charming men and women of his time, painted them with such insight and such grace that his gathered work constitutes of itself—remote as it must have been from any suggestion of the public, the official—a sort of National Portrait Gallery. He would not paint the dull, if only, it might seem, because it was they who wished to pay him for his trouble: it was the angel of impecuniosity, I remember his remarking, that had given him his freedom, a sensitive angel, no doubt, whose protection he wished not to jeopardize. His studio was thus never closed save to clients—he would fly to escape from a lucrative commission which meant that there would not be good talk during the sittings, the good talk that implied a current of sympathy. Nor was this merely petulant: he could paint only those whom he saw, and he could see only those whom he admired. He painted, as Swinburne criticized, for the "noble pleasure of praising." In this, as in

so many other respects, his fashion was that of the ancients; and one can not but think that his pride, and all this multiform expression of his pride, must have had its effect in the rebirth of the Irish spirit.

SUCH questions, to be sure, could have had no interest for Mr. Yeats himself. "Your artist and poet, unless he becomes a rhetorician," he wrote in one of his last essays, "is a solitary and self-immersed in his own thoughts and has no desire to impress other people." It was thus that we were to see him, a true solitary himself, and never more so than when he most suggested (to those who did not know him) the autocrat of the dinner-table. But as time went on I think his interest in painting in a measure dropped away. When he first came to New York it was still strong; in the early days at Petitpas' he always had a sketch-book in his pocket and would draw as he talked; to the end his letters, his briefest notes, were usually adorned with a little pen-and-ink impression—of himself, as a rule, and not too hasty to fix some humorous or ironic "state of the soul." I imagine, however, that few of the portraits he did here were as good as those he had done at home, perhaps because his sitters were not initiated into the secret, which must have been legendary in Dublin, that unless his pictures were carried off, tactfully but forcibly, at the right moment, he was sure to overpaint and spoil them. His son speaks of his having painted a pond somewhere in Ireland: "He began it in spring and painted all through the year, the picture changing with the seasons, and gave it up unfinished when he had painted the snow upon the heath-covered banks." Every one discovered this trait sooner or later, but in New York it was usually later: it was not the open secret it might have been if his American sitters had been in a position to compare notes. And besides, who could escape from his presence?—like Socrates, he was a flute-player more wonderful than Marsyas, who charmed us with the voice only. His art suffered in consequence, for he required the co-operation of a practical and resolute sitter. Alas, he should have painted only men without ears.

It was at Petitpas' that his star rose for us. He had found his way to that friendly house within a year of his arrival, and was not to leave it again; and there he had his "Indian summer of the mind," a Jovian old age without any visible counterpart in a country where age as well as youth obeys the counsel of Mr. Rockefeller—not to talk but to saw wood. For his play of conversation he required no such preliminaries as Sarah Battle—there was no rigour in Mr. Yeats's game; yet one condition he would not forgo, a clear, abundant light. He disliked the duplicity of the candle-lit American interior; he wished to follow the expressions of his interlocutors and would recall the luminous mahogany tables of old that reflected the dazzling chandelier and brightened the faces from below as they were brightened from above. The lights were high in Twenty-ninth Street—witness John Sloan's portrait-group, "Yeats at Petitpas," or even George Bellows's murky lithograph of the same subject. It was really characteristic, this desire, for it signified that our philosopher could not have loved art so much had he not loved human nature more.

His conversation was all of human nature. It flowed with every sort of engaging contradiction, with a wisdom by turns cheerful and tragic and a folly that was always somehow wise. Again, it was always concrete, at least in the earlier time. Mr. W. B. Yeats tells us that when he was a boy his father would choose to read to him the "less abstract" poets; he preferred Keats to Shelley and the first half of "Prometheus Unbound" to the second. During the last few years the metaphysical habit grew upon him and, as he had a terminology all his own, it was sometimes difficult to follow him. Yet even then, as he would distinguish between "feeling" and "emotion," for instance, or "brains" and "intellect," one discerned his point without, so to say, perceiving it—nothing an-

¹ "Inheritors." Susan Glaspell. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co. \$1.50.

noyed him so much as to be pressed for a definition. Besides, his point never failed to bury itself in one's mind: one would find oneself puzzling it out years afterward. He had lost some of his mischievousness, so that he would no longer maintain, for instance, that the English are even inferior tailors, and that they are such good poets because they are tyrants in their own houses, but he still clothed his discourse in the gayest web of images. He would say of the difference between a photograph and a portrait that the photograph is like the description of a ball given by a jaded, bored, literal-minded old chaperon, the painting like a description of the same ball given by a pretty girl who has thoroughly enjoyed herself. He would picture the Puritan minister "sitting in company with the father of the family in a sort of horrid conspiracy to poison life at its sources." He would tell of some Irish peasant who, describing a well-dressed man, added that he "fell away in the breeches." Or he would call up some picture from the past, as, for instance, of John Richard Green, in the days when he was known as a brilliant man who had done nothing and was not expected to do anything—of Green, in some drawing-room, surrounded by admirers, and remarking in a high chant: "All women seek to combine two mutually incompatible positions—the position of perfect strength and the position of perfect weakness."

He had forgotten nothing that revealed human nature at its most singular, its most touching, its most absurd, above all its most characteristic. He could forgive anything but rhetoric, legality, emotionality and gregariousness—these were his four abominations. He had had reason in his own country to deplore the folly of the oratorical mind; and regarding legality his opinion was much the same as St. Paul's, that it was the "strength of sin"—perhaps he was the more certain of this because he had begun life as a lawyer himself. As for his dislike of the emotional and the gregarious, it may have been a result of certain American experiences: I know that his opinion of Whitman changed entirely after he had lived here for a while. Having admired him for years he turned against the "emotional bard," remarking in one of his later letters, "The Sacred Nine have not heard his name even to this day." Nor was he free from reservations in regard to the Celtic Revival; I remember his horror, for instance, when a rather gushing lady accused him of having had some commerce with fairies. The truth is that he was at bottom an old-fashioned Anglo-Irish country gentleman, redolent of the classics, a sceptic of the eighteenth-century tradition, or of the tradition of Erasmus and Montaigne, who had also drunk in his youth at the spring of "political economy" and John Stuart Mill; and upon this foundation had been superadded, to the confusion of the simple, the doctrines of Rossetti in painting, of Morris in economics and of Irish Nationalism in the political sphere. It was a combination that made for an infinite, if a somewhat bewildering, wit—a wit, however, that, where spirits were concerned, drew the line just the other side of the banshee.

"IDLENESS and conversation" was his only formula for the good life. Like the "Be hard!" or the "Carefully cultivate your faults" of other sages, it was a stumbling-block to the foolish, among whom Mr. Yeats counted the population of Belfast and those who have "leather" faces and pursue the dollar. In his own case it signified an activity of the mind and the feelings that knew no check; for if his painting had lapsed, he wrote his first play at seventy-eight and was experimenting in poetry to the last week of his life. His "high-bred amicability," to quote Goethe's phrase about Molière, was a veritable school of manners, of the natural in manners; and he was always quick to draw out the least articulate of his companions. How many must have blessed him who had never known, till they talked with him, that they too had something to say! But what seems most fortunate now is that his exile turned him more and more to writing—the three books that will give him a distinguished place in literature were all written in America. For years he

had been urged to write his reminiscences—York Powell, as we discover in the latter's published correspondence, suggested it a generation ago; and his "Recollections of Samuel Butler" shows us what the book would have been, or perhaps will be, for he left a mass of manuscripts that must include many a pendant to that diverting and picturesque impression. What does it matter? He drew his own portrait in every line he wrote. Had the "Pensées" of Pascal taken their final shape we should have had only the same Pascal, plus the mortar of "rhetoric": and it is all the more characteristic that in Mr. Yeats's record we should miss the connecting links he so cheerfully ignored in life.

FROM these essays and these letters,¹ the thought drifts up, as Mr. Ezra Pound says, "as easily as a cloud in the heavens, and as clear cut as clouds on bright days." In the essays his conversation lives again; in the letters we find it recollected, as it were, in tranquillity, soberer than his wont was, if only because more studied. Yet everywhere the effect is of pure spontaneity. He will mention "the most deliciously uninteresting young girl I ever met, her perfect aplomb in selfishness was a perpetual surprise and pleasure." He will say that "perfectly disinterested, an absolutely unselfish love of making mischief, mischief for its own dear sake, is an Irish characteristic." He will speak in this fashion of the "dungeon of self-hatred which is Puritanism":

The supremacy of the will power infers the malediction of human nature that has cursed English life and English letters. I referred to Bunyan as foremost in the malediction movement. He would have called Hamlet 'Mr. Facing Both-Ways,' and Juliet 'Miss Bold Face' or 'Carnality,' and Romeo 'Mr. Lovelorn,' and Macbeth 'Mr. Henpecked,' etc., finding where he could epithets and names to belittle and degrade the temple of human nature and all its altars.

He will press to the depths and return with this:

'Except for one or two I have never had a happy day,' said the magnificently fortunate Goethe. The never dying aches of the probe of pain are in every bosom; only while others resort to some kind of laudanum the poets let these work, finding in them the root of happiness, the only sort which, though it be twin with sorrow, is without a fleck on its purity.

He will recur to those leading ideas—that "desire and not emotion is the substance of art," that "character is the self-evolved enemy of personality," that "in obeying rules, the highest even, we should never forget that in so doing we are not alive"—which underlay all his other thoughts and expressed his own "certitude of belief." His mind was of such a perfect candour that the printed page reproduces it like a sensitive plate; we hear him talking as we read, we see him stoop and smile.

No doubt the novelty of his American experience, the sharp contrast with everything he had previously known, led him thus to define his point of view. His essays on "The Modern Woman" and "Back to the Home" are markedly the fruit of such a reaction: in the presence of our chaos the disparate elements in his own mind, in his life, in his memory, flew together and he rose above them in harmonious flight. So we may say that America had its share in the making of him. It was his energy, he said, a month before he died, that kept him in his adventurous exile; but he also stayed because he liked us. That was a great compliment, and one we shall not forget.

THE Reviewer recommends the following recent books to the notice of readers of the *Freeman*:

"The Golden Fleece: and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles," by Padraic Colum. Pictures by Willy Pogany. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

"A Revision of the Treaty," by John Maynard Keynes. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$2.00.

"Sour Grapes," by William Carlos Williams. Boston: The Four Seas Company. \$2.00.

¹ "Essays: Irish and American." John Butler Yeats. With an appreciation by "Æ." New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.
"Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats." First and Second Series. Selected by Ezra Pound. The Cuala Press, Churchtown, Dundrum, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

MANY pundits of ancient times were absorbed in astrology, alchemy and other pseudo-sciences. The product of their countless years of research and speculation is of less moment to the modern world than the achievement of the short life of one French scholar—Champollion. His deciphering of the Rosetta Stone—mutely eloquent in the British Museum—made it possible for the archæologists of the last hundred years to uncover much of the hidden past.

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